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WOMEN'S WORK

BY

MISS AGNES AMY BULLEY

AND

MISS MARGARET WHITLEY

With a Preface

BY

LADY DILKE

Methuen & Co.

36 ESSEX STREET, LONDON, W.C.

1894

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PREFACE

THE writers of the present volume have a purely practical object in view. They have no desire to discuss, theoretically, the duties, rights, and responsibilities of women. They consider that it would be unwise to give prominence to considerations affecting the political or social position of women, in a work dealing specially with their industrial situation.

On the other hand, they are fully aware that there is a necessary connection between the views which appear to be in course of formation as to the proper position of women in the labour market, and the change which has taken place in the standpoint from which all questions—even the most abstract—regarding the condition of women are now discussed. Various reforms have been forced on us within the last thirty years through the necessity of recognising, legally and socially, that development in the relations of women to the state and to society which has been brought about by the pressure of the altered circumstances of modern life. Unfortunately, the agitation which has accompanied the carrying of these reforms has been characterized, in some directions, by a deplorable lack of self-control and judgment on the part of certain of

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those who have put themselves forward as the leaders of their sex. In the past, it must be confessed that our social system has not afforded to the majority of women those opportunities for the acquisition of disciplined habits of mind which are to be found only in bearing the responsibilities of independent action and self-government. When we hear the voices of those who have been called the "shrieking sisterhood" uplifted in frenzied violence against the male oppressor, when we are tempted to repudiate their follies, we may remember that crimes against good sense, good taste, and good feeling are, like other crimes, bred of the bitter resentment of wrong which springs in the breasts of all who awake to consciousness of the suffering inflicted by centuries of unjust rule. This being so, we may see some extenuation even of the ravings of those unhappy "wild women" who appear to hold the most serious national interests as of no importance, in comparison with the fascinating amusement of fostering an unwholesome antagonism of sex.

The clamour raised by those who have taken this line of extreme reaction has retarded the advance of public opinion in the direction of practical and needed reform, and has gravely hampered the efforts of those who have striven to arouse public interest in the attempt to better the position of women in various fields of labour. People have, not unnaturally, been alarmed by what seems to many the absurd suggestion of equality between the sexes, and, shrinking from the assertion of such principles, have adopted an attitude of hostility to the just claims of women

for consideration in respect of their labour and wages, their education, the protection of their earnings and property, the removal of such trade and professional restrictions as are of an artificial character, and the opening out to them of wider means of obtaining a livelihood.

In view of the responsibilities and duties which society now imposes on women, changes in the direction of these reforms are not only reasonable but necessary in the common interest. To insist, however, that such reforms shall under no circumstances take account of the differences of sex is to fight against indisputable facts which must, in the end, prove too strong for us. There is no danger to society in the recognition of equal human rights for both sexes, if we are also ready to recognise the divergence of their capabilities, for the relations of men and women to each other, their functions in the family and the state, must ultimately be determined—however ill it may please the more ardent female reformer—by the operation of natural laws.

If we attempt to ignore these laws we are at once landed in a sea of difficulties. Take this very question of "Women's Work." At the outset we are brought face to face with facts that show us that all employments are not equally suitable to men and women. We find that, in the case of mothers at least, there are many occupations for which they are wholly unfit, but in which men may engage with impunity. Day after day we find child-bearing women compelled to labour after a fashion for which they are

temporarily unfit, and which is not only the frequent cause of permanent injury to their own health, but entails a heritage of disease, or of that feeble health which falls a ready prey to disease, on all their offspring.

I have seen many married women who were habitually employed in handling white lead, and in but two instances has my question as to the health of their children been satisfactorily answered; whilst in certain branches of the potters' trade the employment of the mother not unfrequently means the death of her children in their early infancy. Even where the employment is not in itself unhealthy, its pursuit, regardless of the claims of the family—as in the case where working mothers leave their little ones at the gate of the factory to a stranger's care—has to be paid for by a high per-centage of infant mortality.

It is impossible to look into facts of this class without realising that natural laws impose severe limitations, and will probably continue to impose much the same restrictions, as to health and strength on women workers; and when these marry there arise ties which conflict, and, as far as one can see, will always conflict, with the efficiency and regularity of the labour of married women. The violation of these restrictions on any large scale not only constitutes a danger to the state by causing the steady deterioration of a large section of the population, but the intermittent character of the supply of labour from the ranks of married women greatly heightens the difficulties with which those who are concerned with the organisation of modern

industry have to deal. It is indeed a commonplace now-a-days, that without improved organization and regulation of the labour of women there can be no security for the majority of breadwinners.

The present state of anarchy in the labour world, and the difficulties of our industrial situation, have been appreciably heightened by the course of conduct pursued and advised by those who persist in regarding the interests of women as in themselves separate from the interests of men. Colossal fortunes are built up in large measure by the enforced labour of women and children, who are encouraged in their suicidal rivalry with their husbands and fathers in the labour market by those who do not realise the retribution which follows on the adoption of their counsels. I have used the word "enforced" advisedly; unchecked competition is a force of great power. There are masses of workers in England who are no more free to choose their work, or to make terms for it, than were the slaves on a Virginian plantation. The Newcastle woman in the white lead works of Elswick, who counts seven little ones at her board, whose man is out of work, is tied and bound as with chains. Her man, her children, look to her for food, and at her heels are hundreds of other women in similar distress, whose breadwinners are, perhaps through no fault of their own, also out of work, or in receipt of wages wholly inadequate to the maintenance of the family. Those who encourage our women to treat men as their rivals, to compete with them, and by their competition to persistently reduce the earnings of men, are doing their

best to aggravate this state of things. The wages of the husband and father being reduced by the entrance into his trade of the women who undersell him, the wife and mother needs must turn her back upon her home, and give her working day to make up the difference. In this way the homes of our working classes are too often destroyed, and the health of future generations sacrificed.

Apart from the fact that, in most trades, women have made their appearance on the scene in the capacity of "blacklegs," it must be admitted that there has been, on the side of men, something like resentment at the intrusion of women into professions or branches of industry which have been hitherto reserved to themselves. The expression by the men of this natural feeling—in the case of the doctors it was something more—has, as naturally, irritated the friends of those women who are seeking fresh means of employment; it has enabled them to appeal for sympathy and support from the public as against the "injustice" of men, and it has strengthened their determination to treat men, at all costs, as rivals and enemies who must be driven from their occupations by what I once heard one of these ladies describe, with more force than elegance, as "the cheaper animal."

To the onslaught of these shortsighted champions of the working woman's cause, the men, with equal unwisdom, have retorted by raising, on every occasion, possible or impossible, the plea of "unfitness" as a bar to the treacherous encroachments of the opposite sex, and they have thus, in their turn, tried to win popular sympathy with

their efforts to prevent the entrance of women into certain coveted employments, or to expel them from others in which they have already gained a footing. "Unfit!" Yes, undoubtedly, much labour at present performed by our women is unfit, if there is any fitness in our old and cherished ideal of home and of the place of the woman in the family; but, if we once enter on the line of restricting their employment by artificial barriers, it seems to me difficult to foresee the number and variety of the complications which would ensue.

We may, however, freely concede that some interference may be necessary where, through the helplessness of the employed and the unscrupulousness of the employer, the health and wellbeing of future generations is jeopardised. In other words, certain restrictions on the labour of children and child-bearing women may be required by the interests of that society of which they are a part; further than this it seems scarcely wise to go in our demand for anything like legislative interference in respect to this matter of "unfitness." The true remedy lies in the direction of the better organisation of the trades themselves. The same too may be said of the disastrous effect on the market of that increasing supply of cheap labour which is ever swelling to larger and larger proportions through the influx of our women. Instead of encouraging them to enter into competition with men, and by so doing to drag wages down to lower and yet lower levels, the task before us is to teach them that the interests of labour are one, and that wherever they enter a trade they

must in self-protection refuse to sell their labour for less than a rate proportional to that demanded by their men.

Increased and effectual organisation would do away with the causes which provoke that clamour for prohibitive legislation which, as in the case of the pit-brow women, calls forth angry protest from those who see their livelihood endangered, and intensifies that bitter spirit of rivalry of sex which is a fatal obstacle to the better and harmonious ordering of the world of industry. The only safe course for women, the only safe course for the community at large, is to consider their industrial position as an essential part of the general problem, not to be dissociated without risk from the organisation of the men. The cardinal points of the programme of the leaders of labour — the shortening of hours, the abolition of overtime, the regulation of wages, the limitation of the number of apprentices in the overcrowded trades—these are matters of chief importance to all workers, matters in which the interests of all, whether they be men or women, precisely coincide. Even where, at first sight, their interests appear to diverge, it will on further consideration be found that such sacrifice of personal freedom as the woman may be, on certain points, called upon to make, she makes for the sake ultimately of her own hearth and of her own children. Those who prefer to regard the interests of men and women as opposed must accept a view of their mutual relations which, involving as it does antagonism of sex, pits the woman against the man in an unregulated competition for employment, which, if forced to its extreme, will end by lowering

the whole level of English life far more surely than the immigration of any number of "destitute aliens."

The difficulties which meet us therefore in adjusting the relations of the sexes in the great field of labour are not insuperable. Once our women workers see how much depends on their co-operation, on their self-restraint, on their standing firm, they will not fail their men, and the difficulties which beset them and their position in the labour movement of the day, once solved in the full light of that which is best for the family, best for our society and best for our national life, we shall assuredly be far on our way towards the settlement of those less pressing grievances which are put forward by the idle classes. The highest interests of women in every sphere of life are indissolubly bound up with those of men, and any attempt to deal with either separately is fraught with danger to the State and to the nation.

This principle lies at the bottom of all reasoned Trades Unionism, which, in so far as it is concerned with the organisation of women's work, has for its ultimate object the restoration of as many as possible to their post of honour as queens of the hearth.

EMILIA F. S. DILKE.

76, SLOANE STREET.
May, 1894.

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CHAPTER I.

WOMEN'S WORK: LITERARY, PROFESSIONAL, AND ARTISTIC.

General characteristics—Classification—LITERATURE: Fiction—Journalism—TEACHING: Recent changes—Day *v.* Resident Posts—High Schools—Advantages and Disadvantages—Hours and Salaries—Report of Committee of Enquiry—Fees—Elementary Schools—Table of Salaries—London School Board—Voluntary *v.* Secondary Schools—Domestic Economy—Demand for teachers—New openings—Higher teaching posts—RELIGION and PHILANTHROPY: Increased employment of women—Women preachers—LAW: Present position of affairs—Conveyancing—MEDICINE: Progress made—Prospects—Recent appointments—India—Pharmacy—Dentistry—Midwifery—NURSING: Inadequate arrangements—Remuneration—ART: Music, Painting, Sculpture—Obstacles to progress—Remuneration—THE STAGE: Prospects—The Ballet and its remuneration—HANDICRAFTS: Artistic crafts—Pottery—Jewellery—Lithography—Engraving—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: Social hindrances.

IN dealing with the more cultured branches of women's work we have to do with a department which, except in one or two directions, is as yet incomplete, being still in process of growth and development. Women are but slowly working their way into the arts and the learned professions, and their place cannot yet be definitely estimated. Progress has been so rapid of late that what is true one year has ceased to hold good in the next. A writer who attempts to deal with matter that is thus in a state of flux can only

hope to give a tolerably faithful picture of the moment, acknowledging frankly that present conditions may soon give place to something very different. A counterbalancing advantage, however, lies in the fact that in literary and professional work women are independent units, and their labour is not, as in manufacture and manual occupations, so mixed up with that of men that it is almost impossible to treat of it apart. In the occupations with which this chapter is concerned each woman as a rule is economically independent of other workers, and is free to make her individual talent and idiosyncrasy fully felt. There is a satisfaction in noting what women are able to do when their hands are free, though a careful examination of the conditions under which their work is carried on may lead to the conclusion that circumstances are not yet as favourable to the production of good work as they will eventually become. It should be premised that work of any kind, literary or other, is here regarded from a purely industrial point of view, and that the aim of the writer is not to criticise, but simply to record.

For practical purposes the occupations here treated of may be classified thus:

(1) Literary work, including journalism.
(2) Teaching.
(3) Other professional work, including medicine and nursing.
(4) Art, including such handicrafts as are practised by women; music, and the drama.

Various occupations not coming precisely under any of these heads are followed by a few scattered individuals, but these will receive merely a passing notice. They are interesting in themselves, but are so largely experimental

that it would be useless to consider them at any length, since they may disappear at any moment.

Literature.—It is only recently that women have entered the field of literature in any numbers. Until the last thirty years or so it may almost be said that only a few exceptional women, able to make their mark as poets or novelists, were occupied to any serious extent in literary work. Nor when we remember that the pursuit of literature was considered to "unsex" a woman, and that Mrs. Somerville had to keep a supply of plain sewing ready to cover her books and papers if a visitor should call, is the deficiency very difficult to account for. Only natures in which genius is a compelling force can burst such iron bonds. Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, Miss Mitford, Mrs. Somerville, Charlotte Bronté, and Mrs. Browning—to name a few of the pioneers—first broke down the barriers. Then other quiet workers crept in, magazines became more numerous, and offered a ready outlet for literary work; biography, history, and science began to be handled by women. Harriet Martineau perhaps more than any other woman typified the modern phase of literary activity, fulfilling in her single person functions any one of which would content most literary women, being novelist, essay writer, historian, and journalist in one. She was the first of her sex to enter upon the routine every-day work of literature, which has been freely trodden since, and her writings embody much of the tone of thought and feeling which is characteristic of the "women's movement" of to-day.

Fiction.—The branch of literature in which women are most successful at present is undoubtedly fiction. Besides the few novelists whose names are widely known,

there are a multitude of scribblers of lesser fame who yet make a good living by their profession. There are grades in these things, and writers whose works are seldom found on the shelves of the fastidious are yet in good demand at the libraries, and have a circulation and a public of their own. An immense amount of second class fiction is written by women, who seem to have a special gift for producing tales that are readable and brightly written without ever rising above the level of mediocrity. There is a still lower literary grade, in which poverty of invention keeps company with a wretched literary style. Yet books of this class are not always unsuccessful.

The writing of fiction is usually supposed to be a highly remunerative occupation, and so indeed it often is. But it does not follow that the writing of three volume novels pays. The phenomenal success, pecuniary and literary, of one or two recent novels must not be taken as a sample of what a writer may expect.* Though a good price is generally paid for a novel if the author has once hit the public taste, only moderate terms can be secured by less known writers, and beginners must be content to part with their works for a very small sum. A well-known novelist may receive £400, £500, or even more for a novel, but a writer of fair reputation does not as a rule receive more than £100 for a novel that may have taken many months to write. If the novelist is wise, however, she will make a varied use of her material. Good prices, say from £100 to £250, are given for serial stories by publishing syndicates, who issue the tale simultaneously in half-a-dozen newspapers; and the regular publishers do not as a rule give any less for novels

* George Eliot received £8,000 for *Middlemarch*, but Mrs. Humphry Ward is said to have received £18,000 for *David Grieve*.

which have already appeared in the serial form. Probably they regard the earlier issue as a good advertisement. Short tales also pay well to those who can write them, and by the contribution of occasional miscellaneous papers to magazines and reviews the strain of prolonged composition may be avoided and the income proportionately improved. A lady novelist and miscellaneous writer in London has been making from £600 to £700 a year for some time, and has lately made as much as £900. Just at present the acknowledged author has an advantage even in journalism, for there is a great demand for articles in newspapers signed by writers of repute. As much as £10 a column is sometimes received for articles not in themselves of an important character by writers whose names are well known in other fields. It is an expensive fancy, and whether it will last cannot yet be predicted; but if one paper indulges in it, the rest are obliged to follow suit. Outside fiction, a good deal of miscellaneous literary work is done by women, of which it is impossible to give any detailed account. Each writer works in her own fashion, and for lack of meeting-places there has hitherto been little interchange of thought or experience among literary women. The foundation of the Writers' Club in London may perhaps be taken as a sign of change in these matters. The formation of this institution is instructive, since it was due to the limitation of the projected "Authors' Club" to men, on the express ground (endorsed by Mr. Walter Besant) that women writers could not afford to pay the subscription. In support of this opinion a lady engaged in literary work in London estimates that few of the rank and file among her colleagues are earning more than £200 a year. On the other hand, some writers have

made a competency for old age, and not a few married women, hard pressed by fate, have contrived to bring up a family upon their literary earnings. Miss Annie S. Swan recently owned to an income of about £1,000 a year, and Miss Yonge made a handsome fortune by her novels. Successful playwrights also make a good deal of money; but it is doubtful whether any woman comes under this category as yet.

Journalism. — At the present moment journalism appears to be the fashionable literary pursuit for women, and their contributions to the daily and weekly papers have increased enormously during the last few years. The general lightening of the cargo which has taken place throughout the periodical press has greatly contributed to this result; for women writers have usually a light touch, and an apparently inexhaustible power of turning out bright and readable, though often flimsy, articles upon social subjects. In the department of dress they of course reign supreme, and few newspapers can now afford to despise this erstwhile frivolous subject. The writers who discourse upon fashion, however, have, as a rule, had little literary training; and through their efforts a kind of press jargon has been evolved, wonderful alike in grammar, in phraseology, in similes. But this is the least creditable form of feminine journalism, and we will not linger over it. In many of the papers written for women (and to which, of course, women largely contribute) there is very fair writing upon a great variety of subjects. Women have occasionally been successful in the main walks of journalism, but the position of the lady who represents the *Daily News* in Paris is probably unique. As a rule women keep to their special department, chronicling the doings of

London society, and taking charge of the lighter topics generally, while their *confrères* are dealing with politics and diplomacy.* This new development of journalism affords an example of the results which may be expected to follow when women are allowed free play to their activities in other directions. They will not always simply duplicate the work of their male predecessors, but will enlarge the field of operations by striking out a line of their own.

It is impossible to name with any accuracy the income attainable in the profession. Few of the women whose names are known in connection with the press are journalists pure and simple, though some of the younger generation are adopting the profession in all frankness, to sink or swim as their luck allows. Some few who entered the field before there were many competitors have achieved a good position, but their number could easily be counted on the fingers. A woman, however, who has a fair variety of subjects at command, and can combine purely literary work with the day-to-day business of a journalist, may make a very reasonable income from her profession—say £400 a year. But a journalist beginning at the bottom of the ladder would take long to mount so high, and would probably be well content, after some years' work, to be earning £200 a year. It should be noted that journalism among women is almost confined to London; for though there are women so engaged in the provinces, it seldom forms their regular means of livelihood.

Teaching.—The profession most commonly followed by educated women is of course that of teaching. Until recently it was almost the only occupation open to the

* Miss Flora Shaw, who writes upon Colonial subjects in the *Times* may be mentioned as an exception.

class above shop-assistants, and even in becoming a teacher a lady was held to have lost caste. The opening of university education to women has given the death blow to such false sentiment, and women are now free to adopt what calling they like without loss of social position.* The foundation of public day-schools for girls and the working of the Education Act of 1870 have diverted the channel of women's activities from private teaching to public schools. Instead of the governess we have the High School mistress; instead of the "Dame" in a cottage the Elementary School teacher. Not that the private governess is in any way abolished, for many parents prefer, or are obliged by reason of residence in the country to have their children taught at home. Both the governess's status and salary are, however, considerably improved, owing to the rise in the general level of education. Greater acquirements are demanded, and payment is higher in return. A resident governess may earn anything from £20 to £200 a year with board. If not resident she hardly obtains the full equivalent in money, since her board costs her employer but little if she lives in the house, and is generally left out of consideration. But for many reasons resident posts are unattractive to the majority of teachers, and a bribe in the way of higher salary has to be offered if a really competent teacher is desired in a boarding school or a private family. Young women entering the profession

* The early students of Girton and Newnham, however, were regarded askance. One of them, now in a position of honour, related that when her intention of going to college became known in the country district where she lived, her acquaintance "could not have spoken worse of her if she had committed a forgery." To another who had gained a scholarship her friends remarked, "You are surely satisfied now, you cannot want to *make use of it*."

generally prefer posts in High Schools, where the work, though fatiguing, is kept within fixed hours, and where time out of school is (nominally at any rate) at the teacher's own disposal. There is something stimulating in teaching large classes, and those who have grown accustomed to it are seldom content afterwards to devote themselves to one or two children. Payment too is regular, and employment tolerably certain, whereas in private families either means or honesty or both may be defective, and in any case the growth of the children deprives the governess sooner or later of her employment. For these reasons therefore High Schools as a rule attract the ablest teachers, unless delicate health or personal predilection happens to weigh in the other direction. A similar state of things prevails with regard to private schools, which are obliged either to pay high salaries in order to attract good teachers, or to put up with the inefficient ones who cannot easily obtain work in a High School.

High Schools.—It is doubtful, however, whether High School work altogether deserves the respect with which it is regarded by aspirants to the teaching profession. A glamour was thrown around it in the beginning by the interest with which the foundation of new schools was regarded, and there is a certain sense of distinction in forming part of an institution whose working always attracts a good deal of local attention. Against these attractions, however, must be set decided disadvantages. In the first place the work is very severe, and it is made harder than it need be by the bad methods of teachers. To impart to large classes the stimulus which is the essence of good teaching is no light task, and the better it is performed the more is taken out of the teacher. But as the actual class

hours are usually short (9 to 1, and 2.30 to 4 on three or four afternoons in the week according to arrangement) this alone would not be found injurious; and where the staff is as large as it ought to be, teachers should get an interval during some at least of the mornings. But the worst part of High School work is the correction of homework, which in many cases takes up most of the evenings in the week. Such an expenditure of energy is almost pure waste, and the mistress comes to school in the mornings tired and dull, incapable of exerting the magnetism which makes the lesson a living thing. It is greatly to the discredit of head mistresses that a greater number of them do not set their faces against this practice. Instead of consulting with their assistants as to how corrections can be minimised, they often insist upon a certain amount of homework being set, and seem to consider that the more of it a teacher does the greater is her value. In reality the opposite is the case, for a good teacher will test her class during the lesson, and thus do away to a great extent with the necessity for homework. Homework cannot be altogether abolished, but it might and ought to be much diminished, in the interests of both teachers and taught. Women need to be less rigidly conscientious in these matters, and more truly enlightened.

Salaries.—The salaries to be earned by assistant mistresses in High Schools can hardly be regarded as satisfactory, though they are probably higher than anything that could be gained by teaching, except in a few cases, before the institution of public day schools for girls. A committee of ladies and gentlemen interested in education recently investigated this question with great care, and a summary of their conclusions may be given here. In the first place they estimate that a change from private teaching

to a High School is "mostly attended by pecuniary loss," which confirms the statement made above. After analysing the replies to schedules of questions sent out to schools, the committee come regretfully to the conclusion that, apart from head mistresses' and a few exceptional posts, "something under £160 per annum is the average reward, after twelve or thirteen years' experience, of the most expensively educated and successful assistant mistresses." From my own knowledge of High Schools I can fully endorse this estimate. Few assistants earn more than £150 a year, and there are probably—nay, certainly—not half a dozen who receive £200 a year. As the reward of an expensive education, and, presumably, a fair amount of talent, these figures can hardly be regarded as satisfactory.

Summing up the general results, "We may say," proceeds the report, "that of the teachers who joined their present school more than two years ago one-fourth are at present receiving an average salary of £82 for an average week's work (the average including very large variations) of 32 hours; half (25 per cent. of whom possess University degrees) are receiving an average salary of £118 for a week's work of about 35 hours; and one-fourth (50 per cent. of whom are University women) are earning an average of £160 in exchange for a week's work of 36 to 37 hours.

"These results do not appear unsatisfactory, but it must be remembered that under the phrase *more than two years* is covered a length of service extending in one case to as many as seventeen years, and of which the average must be taken as very nearly six. Many also of these teachers have had considerable experience in other schools before entering the one in which they are at present engaged."

A further question which the Committee were charged to

investigate was the decline or otherwise of school salaries. Upon this point they remark, "The schools which have been in existence for some years appear to be paying within a trifle of what they paid in 1885, but among the few returns which the Committee have been able to obtain from teachers in the employment of the recently formed Church schools, are some salaries so low as appreciably to affect the general average.

"The Committee, however, are obliged to note—and they do so with the greatest regret—that whereas between three or four years ago the commonest initial salary of non-graduates was fluctuating between £70 and £80, the preponderance has now been decisively gained by the lower figure."

This real though slight retrograde movement in salaries is reinforced by another factor, of which intending teachers should take note.

"Until recently," reports the Committee, "when a new assistant-mistress was engaged in a High School, the agreement then made arranged not only for an initial salary, but also for a scale of annual or biennial increment up to a certain maximum. The Committee learn with regret that in many schools these agreements are no longer being made, and that new mistresses are therefore obliged to trust for the future entirely to the liberality of their councils."

It will be seen therefore that the position of a High School mistress, though fairly stable and moderately well remunerated as women's occupations go, does not present a brilliant prospect. Additional risk arises from the recent establishment of schools, some of which belong to the Church Schools Company, others to local companies, with lower fees than those prevailing in the average High School.

These tend by their competition for pupils to reduce the profits of the better schools, and therefore to lower teachers' salaries. The evil is a serious one, and it is much to be regretted that women, by accepting posts in such schools, should countenance a movement fraught with injury to their fellow-workers.

It is exceedingly doubtful whether the public schools for girls which have sprung up all over the country with such rapidity of late years have been formed upon a sound footing as regards payment of fees and salaries.* Broadly speaking, the fees are too low to pay salaries which will allow the recipients to live in any but a very careful manner. If unhampered by claims of relations, teachers may secure the necessaries, and, to some extent, the comforts of life; but they can hardly allow themselves such recreation, change of scene, and general liberality of living, in the wide sense of the term, as will enable them to recuperate their stock of health, energy, and intellectual brightness, so as to retain freshness in teaching and keep abreast of the times. The right level of teaching cannot be maintained upon any less terms; and so long as girls' secondary schools are founded upon a purely commercial basis, the standard which we have a right to demand from those who have charge of the education given therein will seldom, I fear, be reached. The organisation of secondary schools is, however, too large a matter to be discussed here. The whole question, including the claims of secondary schools upon the State

* The average fee in the Girls' Public Day School Company's Schools is £12 12*s.* 0*d.* *per annum*, the same as that charged by the City of London School for Boys, a richly-endowed school, which has no dividends to pay, and is backed by the richest Corporation in the world.

for support, is rapidly becoming an affair for national consideration. Legislation cannot be long deferred, and the preliminary stage of discussion and debate has already begun.

Elementary Schools.—The conditions under which employment can be obtained in the elementary schools may be found in the official publications of the Education Department, and the general character of the work is also too well known to need description here.* More women than men are employed in the elementary schools, the number of certificated masters being 18,611, of mistresses 27,746. I append tables of salaries drawn up in 1893, by the National Union of Teachers, classified according to the denominations to which the schools belong. It should be noted that the tables refer to certificated mistresses only.

AVERAGE SALARIES OF CERTIFICATED MISTRESSES.

	Principal.			Additional.			Total.
Denominations.	Average salaries, including all professional sources of income.	Number on which average is taken.	Number provided with house.	Average salaries, including all professional sources of income.	Number on which average is taken.	Number provided with house.	Average salaries.
	£ s. d.			£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Schools connected with National Society or Church of England .	72 3 1	8,982	3,752	48 15 1	2,520	150	67 0 0
Wesleyan Schools . .	83 14 10	320	3	49 6 0	220	1	69 14 3
Roman Catholic Schools.	64 17 6	1,350	304	50 4 2	477	7	61 0 11
British, Undenominational and other Schools .	78 3 0	858	167	54 10 3	533	5	69 1 11
Board Schools . .	110 2 6	4,895	512	78 19 8	7,591	31	91 3 10
Total . . .	83 8 6	16,405	4,738	69 6 7	11,341	194	77 13 3

* Regulations as to certificates and examinations are undergoing considerable change, and it is expedient therefore for candidates to consult the latest publications.

NUMBER OF CERTIFICATED TEACHERS IN RECEIPT OF SALARIES OF CERTAIN SPECIFIED AMOUNTS.

MISTRESSES.

PRINCIPAL.

Denominations.	Under £40.	£40 and less than £45.	£45 and less than £50.	£50 and less than £75.	£75 and less than £100.	£100 and less than £150.	£150 and less than £200.	£200 and over.	Total.
Schools connected with National Society or Church of England .	203	320	397	4,626	2,303	1,037	82	14	8,982
Wesleyan Schools . .	3	8	7	150	74	58	18	2	320
Roman Catholic Schools .	16	18	29	1,013	230	43	1	..	1,350
British, Undenominational and other Schools . .	18	22	28	414	217	130	23	6	858
Board Schools . . .	35	56	93	1,269	1,140	1,296	524	482	4,895
Total . . .	275	424	554	7,472	3,984	2,564	648	504	16,405
ADDITIONAL.									
Schools connected with National Society or Church of England .	405	483	395	1,152	70	15	..	..	2,520
Wesleyan Schools . .	25	45	34	107	8	1	..	..	220
Roman Catholic Schools .	46	71	51	298	8	3	..	..	477
British, Undenominational and other Schools . .	41	76	76	288	41	10	1	..	533
Board Schools . . .	146	246	358	2,771	1,956	2,106	8	..	7,591
Total . . .	663	921	914	4,616	2,083	2,135	9	..	11,341

These tables show a considerable difference between the salaries paid in Board and in Voluntary Schools, the Board School average being £91 3*s.* 10*d.* against the highest Voluntary average of £69 14*s.* 3*d.* In rural districts also extra duties of an onerous nature, such as teaching in the Sunday-school, playing the organ in church, getting up village concerts, and performing parochial duties generally, are often imposed by the clerical managers of Voluntary Schools. Small School Boards also are not wholly guiltless

in the matter. Particulars as to these exactions may be learnt from the publications of the National Union of Teachers, which is making a determined stand against their imposition.

The highest salaries are given by the London School Board. Trained assistants (female) begin at £85 a year, and head mistresses receive from £200 to £300. Higher salaries are given for special work, and in the large provincial centres also it may be said without inaccuracy that the regulation scale is constantly broken in order to secure good teachers of special subjects. In London pupil teachers' schools the salaries of assistant mistresses begin at £125 a year, rising by annual increments of £5 to £150. Assistant masters in similar posts receive £140 to £170 per annum. Salaries for both sexes are said to be rising gradually throughout the country, and although a contrary movement has recently been initiated in the London School Board, it is hardly likely that it will be carried out to any great extent.

Elementary *versus* Secondary Schools. — Hitherto elementary schools have not commended themselves as a field of work for the class of women who now form the staff of girls' secondary schools. The salaries offered outside London have not been high enough to tempt them; holidays are short in comparison with High Schools (six weeks in the year instead of thirteen); and, lastly, the conditions as to training hitherto exacted have been practically prohibitive. Women who have already received an expensive education are not inclined to spend two or three years more in a denominational training college. The relaxation of rules in favour of women who have passed certain recognised examinations, and the opening

of day training classes in connection with recognised colleges, such as Owen's College, Manchester, and several of the local University Colleges, may do much to open the elementary schools to a more cultured class of women. Such women would soon obtain the headship of a school, and would then, under a liberal Board, find a good field for the exercise of talent and organising power. I fear, however, that the shortness of holidays may still prove a serious obstacle.

Domestic Subjects.—Meanwhile a new field of work is being opened by the inclusion of domestic subjects in the school course. A teacher of cookery in elementary schools can earn from £80 to £100 a year in a fairly agreeable manner, and private and visiting teachers often earn more. Dressmaking and laundry work are also in great demand, particularly in evening continuation schools; and if to these subjects is added a knowledge of sick-nursing and elementary hygiene, the combination forms an admirable stock-in-trade for a teacher. In some towns School Boards are training their own teachers, probably with more haste than thoroughness, to fill the posts for which such a sudden demand has arisen. Instruction in domestic subjects is also being carried on under the auspices of the County Councils, for there are few among their number that have not devoted a share of the funds available under the Technical Instruction Act, and in towns by the power of levying a penny rate, to the furtherance of technical education, in which domestic instruction for girls is almost always included. Thus, throughout the length and breadth of the land, teachers of these subjects are eagerly sought; and cookery schools embryo technical schools for women, and voluntary

agencies, such as the National Health Society, are busily employed in training teachers and sending them out to different districts. The Liverpool School of Cookery is particularly active in this direction.

The misfortune is that in these subjects there is no definite standard, and each school trains after its own fashion. The money for technical education was gained by a side wind, and the passing of the Act found the country unprepared, no organised system of instruction or of training for teachers being in existence. As experience is gradually accumulated the different agencies at work will probably make comparison of methods and adopt to some extent a common system and standard. In this connection it should be mentioned that though women have no place upon County Councils, they may be and are appointed upon the local committees for carrying out the Councils' schemes, and in this way they are able to take an active share in educational work.

It cannot at present be foretold what shape this large enterprise will eventually take, but it seems likely that for some time to come the teaching of domestic subjects will form an important and considerable opening for women. It is fortunate that it is so, since many are thereby enabled to find congenial employment who have no taste for the purely literary side of education. In time permanent institutions for domestic instruction will probably be formed in the large centres of population—indeed such a movement has already begun. The superintendence of work at these centres, which will also embrace outlying districts, must give rise to good appointments, and it is well to bear in mind that these will certainly fall by preference to women who besides technical knowledge have received a good

general education, and possess powers of organisation and management. Women so qualified will probably be highly paid. The rank and file may not impossibly find their earnings diminish as their numbers increase; at present their services are at a scarcity value. In view of the certain extension of this branch of teaching work it is worth while for girls or their parents to consider whether (viewed as a wage-earning instrument solely) a course at a school of domestic economy, requiring at most two years, and costing a comparatively small sum (say £15 per annum), is not more advantageous than three or four years at Oxford or Cambridge, costing from £70 to £100 a year. In the ordinary branches of teaching, as I have shown, a woman seldom earns more than £150 a year, and teaching is almost the only breadwinning occupation followed by women graduates. I know teachers of domestic economy who make as much or more in the winter months, and have the summer free for either rest or self-culture.

Higher Teaching Posts.—But few posts of higher teaching or superintendence are open to women. Even those mentioned above are only just beginning to take visible shape. Headships of High Schools are of course important positions, and are often well paid. An initial salary of £250 a year (sometimes, however, only £150) is offered, generally with rooms, but not board; capitation fees, varying from 10s. to 30s. are usually added, but these do not begin until 100 pupils have been entered. Thus in an unprosperous neighbourhood a mistress may have all the trouble of organising and managing a school for £150 or £200 a year; for it is precisely in these districts that the lowest initial salaries are offered. In some few cases the income rises to £700 or

£800 a year. The headships of colleges and training colleges available are of course very limited in number, and the same may be said of the college lectureships at Oxford and Cambridge, with rooms in college. These are not well paid, and are chiefly attractive for the pleasant university life they afford. Few women are as yet engaged as University Extension lecturers, though it is hard to see what impediment, beyond the prejudice of sex, stands in the way of their employment.

Religion and Philanthropy.—Religion and Philanthropy have not hitherto been reckoned among the avenues leading to remunerative employment for women; but it is by no means certain that this will be the case in the future. The Catholic Church has always provided careers for women in connection with convents and sisterhoods, and institutions formed upon their pattern are springing up in the Church of England and even in the Dissenting churches. Since, however, the members are merely supplied with board, lodging, and clothing, and are content to find their reward in the satisfaction of their calling, there is little further to be said about these occupations from the industrial point of view. The feminine side of religious and philanthropic work, however, is developing upon much broader lines than heretofore, and though at present it partakes largely of the character of amateur work, it can hardly fail in course of time to create remunerative and (if the term may be allowed) professional occupations for women. To some extent this is the case already. Even in the Established Church the propriety of women preaching appears to be regarded to some extent as an open question, and—with or without formal sanction—the innovation seems destined

to spread. Whatever else women preachers may lack they at anyrate seldom fail of a congregation, an item which no church can afford to disregard. It can hardly be doubted that in this field also the labourer will eventually be found worthy of her hire. For example, philanthropic societies have usually a paid secretary, besides, in many cases, visitors, lecturers, and propagandists. Most of the religious bodies have now "Settlements" in the London slums, with women's branches. The resident manager is certainly paid in some instances, and will no doubt soon be in all. Political work may also in time afford occupation to a limited number of women. It is, however, in purely religious work that we may expect to see the next development of women's activities. In almost all denominations women are already at work preaching and exhorting, and the desirability of giving formal sanction to their proceedings is being actively discussed in Nonconformist churches.

Law.—Of the learned professions only one, that of medicine, is open to women. A combination of law and ancient custom keeps women out of the legal profession, and it is only in certain of its approaches, such as conveyancing and accountants' work, that they are free to seek a livelihood. A summary of the case by Miss Eliza Orme LL.B., gives a clear idea of the situation. "Women can make wills and simple agreements without qualification. Anything else (*i.e.* deeds) must be *nominally* done by a solicitor, and women can only be employed by them as clerks. Women cannot go into court. If they do chamber practice (*i.e.* settling difficult deeds for solicitors, or giving counsel's opinion), they can only do it through barristers as 'devils,' receiving half fees. If women are to be solicitors the Act

will need altering. To be barristers they must be admitted by the benchers of one of the four Inns (Inner and Middle Temple, Benchers' Inn, and Gray's Inn), and if a woman applied, probably a joint council of all would sit.

"The Benchers might admit them as certificated conveyancers, which would not allow them to plead in court; but men themselves have not used their certificate for many years.

"The University of London law degree is open to women. It is a thorough practical test, but not a legal qualification to practice."

From this summary it will be seen that the door of the legal profession is still fast closed. There is no difficulty however in a lady's practising as a conveyancer, and no reason therefore why more women should not follow the example of Miss Orme in adopting the profession, which is said to offer a fair prospect of remuneration. There is also at least one lady accountant in London, and the audit of societies and public companies, the preparation of balance-sheets and financial statements, may be freely undertaken by women who are willing to train for the work.

It should be added that legal work seems likely to become possible for women in India. Miss Cornelia Sorabji, who recently passed in the law schools at Oxford, is about to take up a Government appointment in her own country, and will be occupied with attending to the legal interests of Hindu women, who are unable to consult lawyers of the opposite sex. It remains to be seen whether her example is capable of being followed by others.

Medicine.—The profession of medicine has at last, after long struggles, been thrown open to both sexes, and women doctors are slowly taking their place in the ranks as recognised practitioners of the healing art. Their presence will tend in an eminent degree to the preservation of health as distinct from the cure of disease, at any rate as far as women patients are concerned; since it is plain that women, and especially girls, can be more readily induced to complain of ailments in the initial and manageable stage if they are able to consult a member of their own sex. This statement is sometimes questioned, but as far as girls, at least, are concerned, I have no doubt whatever of its correctness. And since the seeds of illness are often laid in early life this point is of the very greatest importance. It is not necessary here to recall the history of the struggle for medical education, or to give details as to the places of study open to women.* It is more important to enquire what rank medical women are taking in their profession, and what appointments they are able to obtain. Upon the first point it is still too soon to pronounce an opinion. A medical man does not expect to make a reputation within the time that the majority of women have as yet been at work. There are about 170 medical women upon the register, and of these only a dozen qualified before 1880. It is obviously too early, and the ground covered is too small, to expect conspicuous results as yet; and if a number of women are filling public posts in India, or working at

* For the former see Dr. Sophia Jex Blake's *Medical Women* and *(inter alia)* a pamphlet entitled *Women and Medicine*, by Edith A. Huntley (Lewes: Farncombe and Co., Printers); for the latter *The Englishwoman's Year Book*, which gives a list of medical schools open to women.

private practice in England with adequate success, they and their friends have every reason to be content. In some respects it is said to be easier for women to build up a practice than for men. Dr. Jex Blake remarks that "in point of fact women are continually doing what men hardly ever attempt—viz., settling down in a strange place with no professional introduction to practice by purchase or otherwise; and if gifted with a moderate degree of patience, tact, and other qualities needful in every successful practitioner, they do manage to succeed in a way that certainly goes far to justify their bold adventure." It is usually estimated that five years are necessary to put together a practice that will afford a livelihood. Whether the standard of "livelihood" here taken is as high as that of man cannot be exactly known; but it is certain that women who succeed in the medical profession make much larger incomes than in most other callings.

The appointments which have recently become available are a great help to medical women at the beginning of their career. A medical man usually fills minor posts in hospitals, or acts as a *locum tenens* for a while before attempting to set up for himself; but women have hitherto been obliged to take up practice as soon as their qualification was gained. The New Hospital for Women in Euston Road, officered entirely by women, now affords young doctors the means of gaining experience, and a number of other posts are gradually becoming available. Several medical women hold Government appointments as physicians to the female staff of the Post-office; a lady officiates as assistant resident medical officer in a workhouse hospital, another in the Holloway Sanatorium, others in fever hospitals or as asylum inspectors. A well-known

surgeon in the provinces employs a lady as an anæsthetist, and a country doctor in good practice has for some time been in the habit of employing medical women as assistants. A few middle class girls' schools have engaged the services of a consulting lady doctor, and it would be well if the example were more widely followed; since, apart from cases of illness, there are many questions of hygiene and school arrangements in which a properly-qualified woman could give valuable advice.

Medical Women in India.—An important field for medical women is to be found in India. The Mahommedan races do not allow the presence of a male physician in the zenana; and the Hindus, who have borrowed from the conquering race many of their ideas and customs, are also opposed to the practice. The Countess of Dufferin's scheme for supplying medical aid to the women of India—now too well known to require explanation—was instituted in 1885, and has been warmly supported by native princes, some of whom have founded hospitals on their own account. At present thirteen women doctors are working under the Dufferin Fund, besides assistant surgeons, and over 200 pupils are studying in Indian medical schools. The various missionary societies also educate and support a number of medical missionaries in India. It is possible that some day Government may include the medical profession in the Civil Service, but for the present the work has to be done by voluntary effort. Eventually too Indian women will take over the medical care of their own sisters; but for some time to come the field must continue to be largely occupied by Englishwomen. Hindu and Mahommedan girls do not study medicine; the native students in medical schools

are drawn from the Parsees, Brahma Somaj (Veda Hindus), and Eurasians. Englishwomen holding appointments in India are allowed private practice as well, but the latter alone would never yield a livelihood, since the natives who make use of the dispensaries do not expect to pay a fee. If they receive medicine they do not object to pay for it, and those who send for a lady doctor to attend them in their houses are also ready to pay for her services; but only the comparatively rich think of asking for a doctor's visit. Ladies employed by the association engage to work for five years in India, and, besides a free passage out, receive a salary of 300 rupees a month. Scholarships are attached to some of the women's medical schools, but the amount—£25 or £30 per annum during education—seems very small in relation to the obligations undertaken, which, if not fulfilled, involve the return of the money.

Pharmacy.—One or two ladies have adopted pharmacy as a profession; and as means of training are now accessible, there seems no reason why an occupation which is neither arduous nor disagreeable should not be largely followed by women. Mrs. Clarke Keer has a dispensary in London, and a few other ladies hold posts in connection with hospitals. It has been suggested that the work should be taken up by the daughters of medical men, whose position gives them special opportunities for training.

Dentistry.—Another very suitable profession is dentistry, which is largely followed by women in America, but only by a few in this country. There should be excellent openings in this profession. A dentist once observed to me, that with children a woman dentist would have it all her own way, and would probably beat all the men, for

children were troublesome patients, and men did not know how to deal with them.

Midwifery.—Women of education are being trained in increasing numbers as midwives, and there is abundant opening in this direction for useful and remunerative work. But at present the status of midwives is uncertain, owing to the lax regulations respecting their practice and qualifications. The whole profession is undergoing a change, passing from the ranks of untrained, unskilled, and inefficient work to that of a skilled profession. The registration of trained midwives is being urgently demanded, and a Select Committee has reported in favour of the examination and registration of all who practise as midwives. The necessity for stricter regulations will be apparent when it is stated that seven cases of childbirth out of ten in this country take place without the presence of a medical man, and that the women (mostly poor) who employ midwives have no means of ascertaining their fitness for the duty. The Obstetrical Society, London, gives a midwife's certificate of acknowledged value, which should be obtained by every lady intending to practise in midwifery. For those who wish to undertake benevolent work among the poor, especially in country districts, a knowledge of midwifery is highly desirable. The Midwives' Institute in Buckingham Street, Strand, looks after the interests of midwives, and arranges for their training.

Nursing.—The profession of nursing continues to attract numbers of educated women into its ranks, and facilities for training are said to be insufficient for the demand. (For details see *Englishwoman's Year Book.*) Considering the hardships involved in the profession its continued popularity is surprising. The work of a trained

nurse, whether employed in a hospital or in private or district work, is necessarily severe, and it is to be regretted that more careful provision is not made for the comfort of so useful a class of workers. Hours are long and holidays short, and work of the most trying description is expected to be done year after year, with a mere fraction of the rest and recreation which is considered necessary in other and not more arduous professions. In Nursing Institutes and Homes the dietary is often very poor, and in hospitals the state of things is not much better. It is unfortunately impossible to repeat in any detail the complaints made by nurses without indicating the institutions to which they refer; but most persons with acquaintances among hospital nurses know that abundant dissatisfaction exists in the profession. Examples could of course be given of institutions that are well managed in this respect, but they are, it is to be feared, the exception rather than the rule. Boards of Management are under constant pressure to increase their accommodation, and, funds being seldom abundant, they are tempted to work with an insufficient staff. The consequences are felt most severely by the more educated nurses. It seems to be forgotten that the superior tact and skill which make the cultured woman a better nurse than her uneducated colleague are gained to some extent at the expense of toughness of fibre, and that hours and dietary need modification accordingly. I am afraid that a good deal of the mischief arises from mistaken notions as to what the profession of nursing ought to be. Nurses are supposed to take it up in a missionary spirit for the good of the community, without regard to their own comfort or health. Now unfortunately the more "noble" a profession is considered, the greater is the tendency to neglect the material

well-being of those concerned in it; and nurses have reason to feel the full force of this misplaced sentiment. The policy followed in their regard is as foolish as it is unjust. The inevitable fatigues of a nurse's life require to be counteracted by the most careful provisions for her comfort, if full efficiency is to be kept up; and Hospital Boards would do well to remember that more professions are now open to women than there were when nursing first became popular. The supply of capable nurses is already insufficient, as the recent influenza epidemic showed, and may easily become still more inadequate, if neither facilities for training nor conditions of employment undergo any improvement.

Nurses' Salaries. — Except in institutions to which pensions are attached, the profession of nursing cannot be regarded as a money-making career. At one large London hospital probationers receive £12 with uniform the first year, £20 the second, and the "sisters," or heads of wards, receive £40 per annum. The Workhouse Training Association (for replacing pauper attendants by trained nurses in workhouse infirmaries) gives no salary the first year, £20 the second, rising to £25. A district nursing association in the provinces gives trained nurses £24 the first year, and salaries rise to £30—board, lodging, and washing being also found. From £25 to £30 therefore generally represents the money payment of a trained nurse. The matron of a hospital may receive anything from £50 to £100 per annum. In the large London hospitals the latter sum is often exceeded, with the addition of house, servant, and handsome fees from probationers. For heads of hospitals therefore the profession is by no means unremunerative; but these posts

are few and far between. With the multiplication of cottage hospitals which is certain to take place minor posts with fair salaries and a not too arduous life will become available. Private nursing under a medical man is often well paid, but uncertainty of employment has to be taken into account. Co-operative associations of nurses are also being formed, and it is possible that by their means a larger proportion of the fees paid by patients may find their way into the pockets of those who earn them.

Art. Painting and Music.—And now what must be said of the domain of the arts and of women's place therein? If women have entered but timidly into this fair kingdom, it has not been for want of fitness, as the rapid success of a few among them clearly shows; the hindrance has lain rather in the prejudices of society and the lack of proper training. Though rapidly disappearing, the former are not yet extinct; means of training are not the same for both sexes, nor have women ceased to suffer from the blasting influence of Puritanism upon art. Anything that damages the social reputation of a profession bars it more or less to women; and anything that makes training difficult or expensive is a more serious hindrance to women than to men, since parents are not so willing to make sacrifices for a girl as for a boy. Astonishment is often expressed at the absence of women composers of merit; but the reason is not really far to seek. Until the foundation of the London schools of music (to which that of Manchester must now be added) musical education has been difficult to obtain by either sex. But the practical part, which involves an acquaintance with orchestral instruments, the methods of opera, the arrange-

ment of church music, the management of chorus parts and a hundred other details, has hitherto been almost unattainable by women. There seems little *à priori* reason for supposing that music is an affair of sex. Fanny Mendelssohn was scarcely, if at all, less gifted than the brother who so calmly placed her in the background, and was not ashamed to appropriate the credit of her work. Some of the "Lieder ohne Worte," and "O rest in the Lord"—the latter perhaps the most popular of all Mendelssohn's melodies—were, as is now generally known, composed by Fanny.

Remuneration.—It is impossible to give any estimate of the value of either music or painting as a means of livelihood. A music teacher, if well qualified, may earn a fair living; and a teacher of an instrument less commonly learnt than the piano—say the violin—may sometimes earn £150 or £200 a year while quite young. Singers, unless of the first rank, generally find it profitable to combine private teaching with public performances. For a concert engagement a beginner may receive £5 with travelling expenses, rising soon, if successful, to £10 or £20. Great performers are of course at a "monopoly value," as the economists say, and their annual earnings often run into four figures. As for composing, its pecuniary reward is very uncertain. "It does not pay to write symphonies," a popular composer naively remarked, and the same thing may be said of most of the higher kinds of composition. Incidental music for stage plays is often well paid, and a popular song may yield a small income in itself. The budding composer, however, like the artist or author, must be content to let his first works be sold for almost nothing for the sake of making a reputation, but this once made he can command his own

terms. A deadening effect is exercised on musical art in this country by the mischievous system of royalties. Many singers high in the ranks will not look at a modern song unless they are paid a handsome royalty for singing it, and thus a valuable means of advancing the reputation of a young composer is rendered useless.

Painting and sculpture are so purely an affair of the individual that it is more difficult to make general statements with regard to them than with any other artistic profession. Each artist works on his own lines; there is no general or usual rate of remuneration, and no one can predict with any certainty the prospects of the profession even to a painter of talent. Indeed the less the talent, often, the greater the success. All that can be said is that the woman who means to live by her brush or her chisel must be prepared for a hard struggle before she can earn a competence; and very few attain to wealth. The development of illustration in periodicals has however opened a large and fairly-well paid outlet for women's work, and many a rising painter would be hard put to it but for the aid that comes—only in guineas and half-guineas it may be, but steadily—from black-and-white drawings for the press. Many men, though at present few women, earn a fairly good living entirely by black-and-white work.

The Stage.—The stage is, socially speaking, becoming easier of entry for girls. Those who wish to succeed must begin young, a proviso which forms a serious disadvantage in a profession involving obstacles to be surmounted, or awkward corners to be rounded. It is difficult to obtain entrance to a good London theatre, and novices generally have to go through a course of probation with a touring company, with the prospect of hard

work, ill quarters, and uncertain pay. The profession is thus encountered on its roughest side at first, and it is not surprising that the prospect should daunt intending candidates. Yet the stage has a fascination of its own, and those who once tread the boards can seldom find it in their heart to forsake them. If a girl can by luck or perseverance gain a footing in one of the good London companies, the life need present no terrors to herself or her friends, and payment will be fair and regular while it lasts; but outside a comparatively small circle the stage, though perfectly reputable, is at best precarious as a means of livelihood. Engagement is almost always for the run of a single piece only, and there is usually no payment for rehearsals. Thus, after weeks of rehearsal, if the piece is unsuccessful, a girl may only earn a fortnight's salary. In these matters actors and actresses are not well used, and when they have learnt the value of united effort they will certainly combine for securing juster terms. There is less cause for complaint in the *rate* of payment, which is generally fair, and often very good; while a successful actress can of course make a very large income. In good theatres a guinea a week is a common wage for a girl who merely "walks on," but with touring companies she is generally expected to serve an apprenticeship before earning anything. If she obtains a speaking part she may earn £2 or £3 a week; but an actress would do well to reckon her salary at half its nominal amount, as she is likely to be frequently out of work. The institution of regular rates of payment is hindered by stage-struck amateurs, who are willing to pay, in some cases large sums, to appear on the boards, even in the smallest capacity.

There are all ranks and grades in the dramatic profession,

and a vast number of actresses never rise above the position of "extra" ladies in pageant plays, or the rank and file of performers in pantomimes. The latter earn from 15*s.* to 20*s.* a week, and their employment is intermittent. In the case of impecunious or unscrupulous managers payment also is uncertain. Girls in the humbler ranks of the profession are subject to all sorts of ill-treatment and swindling. For example, a number of girls were recently engaged for an "open-air fête" in the country during some weeks of the summer. The weather turned out wet, and a friend who visited them found their dressing-tent only partly covered in, and swimming in water. They had attended thirteen rehearsals and a few performances without payment, and but for the intervention of friendly outsiders it is doubtful whether they would ever have received any payment at all. These girls had left paying employment as dressmakers and milliners for this thankless work, yet they endured their unjust treatment without complaint.

Speaking generally, the difficulty of the dramatic profession is, that while talent is rare, it is overcrowded with candidates of very moderate abilities. On this account it is very difficult for a girl to get an opportunity of showing what she can do, and much patience is necessary to success. If possible, a girl should have some other means of eking out her income during the first months or years of the struggle.

Many girls work at dressmaking in the summer months, taking to the stage regularly when the pantomime season comes on. Then there is the ballet, which in London alone employs thousands of women. An ordinary ballet dancer receives £1 to £1 10*s.* a week, and has to

work hard for her money; the best members of the troupe however may earn as much as 35*s.* a week. The earnings of "solo" dancers are of course much higher. English principals in pantomimes receive £5 and £9 a week, but the usual custom is to employ foreigners—French or Italians—who are paid as much as £12 a week. Popular performers receive fancy salaries, and a dancer or music-hall singer who has hit the public taste sometimes makes as much as £70 a week. A lady in this branch of the profession was recently invited to visit America at a salary of £250 a week. A "variety artist" sued her manager for £43 6*s.* 8*d.* as a week's salary, and gained all but the odd £3 6*s.* 8*d.* Miss Loie Fuller, the "serpentine" dancer, was engaged, as a subsequent lawsuit shewed, by a French manager for three years, at a salary of 102,000 francs, or over £4000 a year. If reward went by talent and artistic culture these figures would be highly satisfactory, but as a rule the reverse is the case. With regard to dancing, however, public taste is improving, and both on the stage and in private houses graceful dancing—dancing worthy of being called an art—is increasingly appreciated. A really good dancer is highly paid, though not upon the extravagant scale quoted above.

Handicrafts.—A word must be said about the position of women in artistic crafts and in designing, though it is to be feared that the account will somewhat resemble the famous chapter on "Reptiles in Ireland." Pottery is almost the only field in which women are employed as designers, and here, as in isolated examples in other trades, what has happened is rather that an artist has turned trade designer, than that the trade has educated an artist. For example, a lady now carrying on business as a

jeweller was educated at an art school, and owing to some accidental circumstance began designing for a jeweller. Eventually she set up in business for herself, and still designs many of the articles manufactured in her workshop. Isolated cases of the same kind might be cited from other trades. Speaking generally, however, women designers have not shaken themselves free from the trammels of the art schools, or gained the practical acquaintance with crafts and manufacture which alone can make their work marketable. It is probably more difficult for women than for men to gain this practical knowledge, and those who mean to succeed must bring both courage and perseverance to the task.

Artistic Crafts.—The artistic crafts proper are hardly followed at all by women. With the decay of domestic industries they lost what skill and knowledge they once possessed, and technical education has not yet restored them to their rightful position as skilled workers. If women are employed as jewellers, potters, or even photographers, it is only in the least skilled, and consequently worst paid portions of the work. Thus in the jewellery manufacture they are employed in unskilled operations, such as stringing pearls; and their earnings do not rise above £1 a week, while the skilled labour of men brings in from £3 to £6 a week. At electrotyping, in Birmingham, their wages are not more than 25*s.* a week, and the same might be said of those engaged in the electro-plate manufacture in Sheffield.

A few women are employed in chromo-lithography, but not many lithographers are willing to take women as apprentices. Wood engraving employs rather larger numbers, and the work is fairly well paid. In an office

in which four women engravers work the wages earned per head during three months were, on an average, £2 18*s.* 5*d.* weekly, the highest wage earned being £3 3*s.* 4*d.*, and the lowest £2 13*s.* 7*d.*, representing a payment of 1*s.* 1*d.* an hour. At another office the average weekly wage is £1 18*s.* 9*d.*, the highest being £2 3*s.* 9*d.*, and the lowest £1 7*s.* 11*d.*, representing an average payment of 10*d.* an hour. The entrance of women into such crafts has been materially aided by the Society for the Employment of Women, in Berners Street, which endeavours to find both means of training and business openings for its clients. In artistic crafts which require an apprenticeship women have much opposition to encounter; their entrance is generally opposed by the workmen employed, who fear, and not without reason, that the women will undersell them and bring their wages down. If women hope to gain a footing in skilled occupations they must conciliate opposition, by showing that they have no intention of underselling their fellow workmen.

General Conclusions.—It will be seen that in almost all the occupations here considered women have special difficulties to contend with—imperfect training, amateurish habits, social customs or prejudices, and the opposition of those who, sometimes from prejudice and sometimes from a well-grounded fear of injury, oppose the industrial employment of women. Time and good counsels may be trusted to diminish these obstacles, if not to do away with them entirely. Meanwhile it remains to give women the opportunity, by thorough training, of showing the extent of their capacity for different kinds of work. Disquisitions as to what women can do, or cannot do, are irrelevant at the present moment, when facilities for

training and employment have not been open long enough to test their powers in any direction. In these matters it is safer to prophesy after the event, and it is certain that competition will eventually drive women out of any calling for which they prove themselves really unfitted.

CHAPTER II.

WOMEN'S WORK: CLERICAL AND COMMERCIAL.

ROUTINE CLERICAL WORK: Type-writing and shorthand—Secretaryships—Clerks and Book-keepers—THE CIVIL SERVICE: The Post Office—Number of women employed—Clerkships—Sorterships—Telegraph Learnerships—Counter-women and Telegraphists—The Telephones — Complaints against women — COMMERCE: Subordinate position of women—Shop-keeping—Trade as a Career—SHOP ASSISTANTS AND THEIR CONDITION: Wages—Deductions from Wages—Fines—Forms of Agreement—Long Hours—"Counte and Bed"—Select Committee on Mr. Provand's Bill—Evidence from different places—Select Committee 1888—Standing all day—Effect upon health—The *Lancet* on the provision of seats—Combination of assistants necessary—Insanitary Surroundings—Living in—Evils of the system—Bad food and insufficient accommodation—No social life—Hurried meals—Sunday arrangements—Personal Narratives—Warehouses—Combination among assistants—Objects of the different Societies—Legislation and its probable effects—ADDENDUM: The Reports of the Lady Assistant Commissioners to the Labour Commission—Miss Collet's summary.

Routine Clerical Work. Type-writing.—There has been a great increase of late in the variety of routine clerical work open to women. The typewriting machine might have been designed for their especial benefit, since it has brought within their reach a number of occupations well suited to their capacities. The lady typist and shorthand writer is a recognised institution in American

commercial houses; American women, with their superior adroitness, having promptly seized upon an opening so favourable to their interests and adapted it to their own use. The difficulty as to the two sexes working together is not as much felt in America as here, and where special arrangements have to be made or accommodation provided for women clerks it is done without demur. For type-writing to be satisfactory as an occupation it should be combined with shorthand, for a typist pure and simple can seldom rise beyond a clerkship in a type-writing office, and must not expect more than clerk's pay; and in this case her weekly wages will certainly be counted by shillings, not by pounds. The addition of shorthand renders many kinds of secretarial work available, and here, as in other occupations, any special skill or knowledge may lead to a considerable increase in wages. An industrious typist who can secure a good connection may make a fair, though not a large, income by working on her own account. Authors and journalists often dictate their work to a shorthand writer and typist, receiving it back in a few hours in a handy and legible form. The usual fee is from 2*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* an hour. Doctors, literary and public men, often give permanent employment to a typist, and this kind of work is specially suited to women. Here again, however, brains as well as manual skill are needed. Mere routine work can never earn more than low wages.

Clerks and Book-keepers.—Female clerks and book-keepers are largely employed in retail houses of business. To judge from their rapidly increasing numbers it would seem as if their work were quite as satisfactory as that of men, and yet their wages are invariably lower. Herein, it is to be feared, lies the only difference between

them and the male clerks whom they supersede. From 15s. to £1 a week is probably as much as a woman can expect in this employment; but, on the other hand, a girl with an aptitude for business may sometimes make a clerkship the stepping-stone to a forewoman or manager's post, thus leading, of course, to much higher wages. A well-known shipping firm in Liverpool has for many years employed a lady to take charge of all the ship linen and furniture. Under her is a large staff of clerks and needlewomen, who carry on their work in comfortable and well-arranged premises not far from the Docks. It is probable that as women come to receive a more practical and thorough education they will be more largely employed in posts in which care and attention to small details is important. At present the capacity which women undoubtedly possess in this direction is often neutralised by slovenly business habits.

The Civil Service.—Of clerkships those in connection with the Civil Service are perhaps the most important. From the eagerness with which women compete for its posts, indeed, the Civil Service would seem to be a very El Dorado for its employés, a conclusion which is hardly warranted by an examination of its conditions. The work, however, is light, demands only moderate abilities, and is performed on the whole under agreeable conditions. Wages are not high, but pensions are attached to the most important branches, an advantage which hardly any other employment open to women possesses. A woman who has worked for forty years in the Post-office may retire with a pension equal to two-thirds of her salary. Even after ten years of service a pension of one-sixth is available. The respective amounts, in the

case of Post-office clerkships (to be described immediately), would probably be about £80 and £15 per annum respectively, and a woman must be earning exceptional wages in any other employment to put by sufficient to bring in an income of even these modest dimensions. It is unfortunate that in this, as in so many other occupations, women are willing to undersell men. The clerks in the Post-office naturally look with anything but favour upon the influx of women clerks at a lower wage, knowing that it means their own gradual supercession. It is sometimes said that the less robust health of women, and their consequently less regular attendance, forms sufficient justification for a lower rate of pay; but the alacrity of the public departments to engage female clerks seems to shew that any disabilities on the score of health are more than balanced by diminished salaries. Where the advantages to the employer are equal there is seldom any eagerness to prefer the labour of women. A similar displacement of men is going on in other Government departments; at the War Office, in Special Commissions, and elsewhere, women are being engaged for routine clerical work, and almost always at a lower rate of payment than men.

The Post-office.—The most important public department with regard to the employment of women is the Post-office. The Postmaster-General's Report for 1891 shows the total number of officials on the permanent establishment, with sub-postmasters and letter receivers, to be 63,868, of whom 8877 are women. Of these, 906 women are employed as clerks in the chief offices in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and 3750 as "counter-women" and telegraphists throughout the kingdom, besides

others employed as sub-postmistresses and letter receivers. These figures however do not represent the gross total of the Post-office staff, for we are informed that about 54,000 other persons are employed more or less in Post-office work, and of these 16,000 are women. In this estimate are probably included the extra clerks, generally former *employés*, who come in and help at times of special pressure, as well as the domestic servants and needlewomen whose business it is to keep the buildings and miscellaneous Post-office property in order.

Classification.—An impression prevails that women are only employed by the Post-office in selling stamps and sending off telegrams, that being the only branch of Post-office work of which the general public has cognisance. "Counter-women," however, as these *employés* are technically called, are only subordinate officials, and their work is both less agreeable and worse paid than that of some of the other departments. Post-office appointments, as far as women are concerned, may be classified thus:

(1) Clerkships in the four great branches of the Post-office—the Savings Bank, Postal Orders, Returned Letters, and Clearing House.

(2) Sorterships.

(3) Telegraph Learnerships.

(4) Counter-women and telegraphists.

Clerkships.—Of the posts just enumerated the clerkships are the most important and best paid, and are filled by a superior class of women. During some years they were obtained by nomination, and the women chosen generally came from the cultured classes; but now all appointments are thrown open to competition, and anyone within the limits of age (18 to 20) who can pass the not

very severe entrance examination is eligible for a vacancy. There is considerable demand for these posts, and it is considered a very small competition if there are only two qualified candidates for every vacancy. The hours of attendance in the office are in most cases seven daily, and a month's holiday is allowed. Salaries commence at £65 a year, rising by an annual increase of £3 to £80 in the lowest class. There are possibilities however of much higher salaries, as the accompanying table (drawn from the *Civil Service Competitor*) of numbers and salaries of the female staff at the General Post-office, London, shows—

1	Superintendent . . .	£250	by £15	to £400
2	,, . . .	215	,, 15	,, 400
3	Assistant Superintendents .	200	,, 10	,, 240
2	,, ,, . .	200	,,	,,
18	Principal Clerks . . .	140	,, 10	,, 190
11	,, ,, . . .	120	,, 10	,, 170
50	First class Clerks . . .	105	,, 5	,, 130
51	,, ,, . . .	85	,, 5	,, 110
324	Second class Clerks . .	65	,, 3	,, 100
295	,, ,, . . .	65	,, 3	,, 80

General Conditions.—Work in the General Post Office is carried on under pleasant conditions. The premises are good, and all reasonable arrangements are made for the comfort of the clerks. Strict privacy is enforced; the clerks never come in contact with the public; and, the routine of the business once mastered, there is a regularity and freedom from worry about Post-office work, which to certain natures is probably attractive. A girl of fair education, but without the special knowledge or aptitude necessary for the teaching profession, may profitably turn her attention to Post-office work, in which the defect of monotony is counterbalanced by regularity of employment and the prospect of a pension in later life. Candidates

must be unmarried or widows, and must be duly qualified in respect of character and health. They must further pass an examination in handwriting, spelling, arithmetic, English composition, geography, and English history. A periodical entitled the *Civil Service Competitor* gives details as to the changes which take place in the regulations from time to time.

Sorterships.—These posts are attached chiefly to the General Post Office in London. Candidates must be "not less than four feet ten inches in height without boots" (a very moderate requirement, surely), and the limit of age is 15 to 18. An examination must be passed in reading and copying badly-written manuscript, handwriting, spelling, arithmetic (first four rules), and the geography of the United Kingdom. Salaries begin at 12*s.* a week, rising by 1*s.* a week to 20*s.*, with prospect of promotion to the higher classes. The work chiefly consists, as the title indicates, in sorting the papers of the department. Like the clerkships just described, the occupation is regular and not disagreeable. An advantage in a young girl's beginning as a sorter is that if she desires to qualify for a clerkship, she may, if she has served for two years, secure an extension of age up to 25. Thus, though she fail to pass the examination at the latest age allowable to outsiders, she may try again, perhaps several times.

Telegraph Learnerships.—The privilege just mentioned is attached to this department also, and appointments as counter-women are now usually filled up from the ranks of the telegraph learners. A preliminary examination must be passed in dictation, handwriting, and arithmetic (first four rules), and successful candidates must attend a Post-office Telegraph School (free) to learn the craft. The course

usually takes three months, but pupils who show no aptitude may be discharged. On receiving a certificate from the school the telegraphist begins work in a Post-office at a salary of 10*s.* a week, rising to 12*s.* and 14*s.*, as she becomes capable of transmitting messages and taking charge of an instrument; thence, if promoted, to 30*s.* or 38*s.* Supervisors may receive from £90 a year to £140. The age for admission in London is 14 to 18, in the provinces 14 to 25.

Counter-women.—This is the only branch of Post-office work which is carried on under the eyes of the general public, the workers serving at the open counters of Post-offices, selling stamps, cashing postal orders, and performing all the miscellaneous duties belonging to a local office. Since the Government took over the management of telegraphs counter-women have been of necessity chiefly recruited from the telegraph learners. A second-class counterwoman receives from 12*s.* to 30*s.* a week; a first-class from 30*s.* to 38*s.*

Complaints against Women.—It must be acknowledged that women have not altogether distinguished themselves in this branch of employment. Sir James Fergusson, when Postmaster-General, felt called upon to issue a circular to Post-office clerks, with pointed reference to the female clerks, recommending the practice of greater civility in their dealings with the public; and the measure was regarded, I think, with general satisfaction. In some commercial centres similar complaints are made of the indifference and carelessness of the girls in charge of the telephones, who do not seem to realise that important business transactions are dependent upon their promptitude and attention. In a large telephone office which I could name women have been replaced by men

to the unconcealed satisfaction of the subscribers. A newspaper editor told me that he always found a great change for the better when evening arrived, and women clerks were replaced by men. It would be easy to make too much of these complaints, but they deserve to be noted in considering the entry of women into new employments.

Commerce.—Leaving clerical work on one side, we may now turn to the wide field of trade and commerce, and examine into the position occupied by women. Here, as in most other departments, their place will be found to be chiefly subordinate. Women rarely enter the higher and more lucrative branches of trade and commerce, while they overcrowd the lower ranks. Isolated cases may be quoted in which the control of large capital is in the hands of women; and as landowners and managers of large estates they often take an important share in commercial operations. We sometimes hear of women millowners and merchants; but these positions are generally the result of accident rather than choice, and women who have become capitalists by inheritance seldom (except in the case of land) take any active share in the management of their property. There are exceptions, however; and it is possible that if a careful enquiry were made they would prove to be more numerous than was supposed. In a recent lawsuit about a colliery the defendant, a lady coalowner, was asked, "You never go down into the mine, I suppose?" "Indeed I do," was the reply. "I take the greatest interest in my property, and I frequently go down into the mine."

Englishwomen lag strangely behind American and French women in the conduct of business enterprise, though whether from lack of talent or opportunity is not

clear. Probably they possess neither the talent of the French nor the opportunity of the Americans. In retail trading women take a much larger part, though here their operations, if on any large scale, are generally confined to one or two trades, chiefly those concerned with women's dress and outfitting. Probably no great number of women are engaged in these enterprises, but in the smaller kinds of shopkeeping they are largely concerned. Very precarious much of this work is. Any decent woman who has saved a little money thinks herself qualified to open a shop and carry on business without preliminary training. The usual result of such experiments is that capital dwindles away before profits have begun to make their appearance. Women do not always realise that the management of even a small business requires knowledge, resource, and an unwearied attention to details.

Trade as a Career.—It is to be regretted that the daughters of shopkeepers, particularly of the wealthier sort, do not more often devote themselves to trade. Their position gives them unrivalled opportunities of learning the business under agreeable conditions, and they would gain thereby an independent position and an occupation of great interest. As forewoman, cashier, buyer, or manager of a department, a girl of superior education with an interest in the well-being of the concern might do good service for the firm. The majority of wealthy shopkeepers' daughters however usually prefer to dissociate themselves as far as possible from the industry which is the source of their prosperity, while pushing their way into society by its aid. *En révanche* ladies of the aristocracy, secure of social position, but lacking in means, have recently taken to retail trade; and though not all the aristocratic millinery and

dressmaking establishments started a few years ago with a flourish of trumpets have outlived the difficulties of early life, the fact that the attempt has been made has contributed a good deal to change the attitude of society towards retail trading as an occupation for women. A few thoughtful parents, perceiving that such occupations as High School teaching offer but a poor reward for the energies of cultivated women, are training their daughters systematically for trade. The wisdom of such a course deserves to be highly commended, for girls so prepared will enter upon their work with every chance of success, and free from the ignorance which perpetually clogs the steps of women's enterprise. To parents not themselves in business the matter may present some difficulties; but for girls whose fathers are in trade, the means of training are of course ready to hand. They will do well to get rid, as speedily as may be, of the false sentiment which makes them despise a pleasant and lucrative employment.

Shop Assistants.—When we come to the lower grades of employment, to the work of shop assistants and book-keepers, the proportion quickly alters, and the women far outnumber the men. There are unfortunately no means of ascertaining the number of women so employed, but the total number of both sexes in the retail trade is about one million, and about four-fifths of the assistants in the drapery trade are women. In other trades the proportion is not quite so high, and in the grocery trade about nine-tenths are men. An account of the labour of men and women in shops (for the two sexes cannot be separated in its consideration) must, if truthfully given, be little else than a recital of their grievances. There are, it is true, establishments where the *employés* are well paid and fairly treated, but their number

is small compared to those in which poor pay, ungenerous treatment, and unhealthy surroundings are the lot of the shop assistant of either sex.

Their Grievances.—The chief points upon which complaints centre are:—

(1) Capricious deductions from wages.
(2) Unfair forms of agreement.
(3) Long hours.
(4) Insanitary surroundings.
(5) Living in.

Wages.—First as to wages. We often hear it said that a young woman serving in a shop is better paid than a governess; and it is true that a young woman of business ability and good appearance engaged as show-woman in a millinery or mantle department can earn from £200 to £300 or even £400 a year—far more than women teachers, except in rare cases, can dream of earning. But these are the plums of the profession, and they are few and far between. The wages of shop assistants are exceedingly variable, small shop-keepers only giving a few shillings a week, the proprietors of large establishments being able to afford a better wage. In the larger shops an entrance premium is often demanded, or at least the assistant must serve for several months without wages. Women assistants, for no apparent reason, receive considerably lower wages than men. The former may earn from £10 to £25 a year with board and lodging, the latter from £20 to £40.*

* It is difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the average wages of women shop assistants. The figures in the text were given me by the Secretary of the National Union of Shop Assistants. Miss Collet (*Report to Labour Commission*, p. 86) gives a table of salaries varying from £7 16s. to £75 per annum. Probably about 10s. a week is the *average* wage, but many who have worked for some years earn, it would seem from the table, about £1 a week, generally without board.

Generally speaking the wages of female shop assistants are estimated to be 33 per cent. lower than those of male assistants. I have not been able to find any reason for the difference beyond the willingness of women to take less than men. It would be interesting to know whether there is any real difference in efficiency between the sexes. I believe that in purely manual occupations lack of efficiency is enough to account for women's lower wages; but in clerical and routine work the reason is not so obvious.

Fines.—The nominal wages of a shop assistant, however, whether high or low to start with, are subject to serious deductions by the way. Few large retail houses are free from a system of vexatious fines, deducted nominally from premiums on sales. I have before me a fine-book belonging to a large London house containing nearly a hundred rules, to the breach of which fines varying from 6*d.* to 5*s.* are attached, with threats of even worse penalties behind. Thus for standing on a chair the fine is 6*d.*; permitting customers to go unserved without calling special attention of buyer or shopwalker, 1*s.*; second offence reported. Omission of particulars as to filling up duplicate forms and returning change, at discretion up to 5*s.*; for sending bad coin to cashier, the loss to be made up, and 1*s.* fine as well. For not having premiums credited on exchange or return of goods, fine 2*s.* 6*d.*, second offence dismissal. Wrong or insufficient address, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and so on through a dozen closely-printed pages, until one wonders how human ingenuity could devise so many punishable offences. In another book of rules, more moderate in dimensions, and animated by a less vindictive spirit than the above, a fine of 6*d.* is levied for taking wrong change, and only half the

deficiency is charged when bad coin is presented. Allowing a customer to go unserved without calling the attention of the "buyer," however, still incurs a fine of 1s. Regulations such as these sufficiently explain the over-eagerness of shop assistants to sell, which is often so annoying to their customers. The unhappy victims of the fine-book have no choice but to cajole or worry the customer into buying, since their very livelihood depends upon success. Where such minute attention to details is necessary as in shop work, fines may be to some extent a necessary evil; but there can hardly be sufficient reason for the endless multiplication of petty exactions which an examination of fine-books reveals. One would gladly see the system exchanged for some plan of profit-sharing which would secure the co-operation of assistants by more agreeable means. It is true that a bonus on purchases is sometimes given during the annual sale, but this apparent boon is again accompanied by a liability to fines which must detract considerably from its advantages.*

Agreements.—On entering a situation shop assistants are often obliged to sign agreements which place them practically at the mercy of their employers. In some cases they agree to accept instant dismissal if fault is found with their work or conduct, in which case they bind themselves not to take action in a court of law. A girl may thus be discharged at a moment's notice, and find herself literally in the streets.† The formation of a strong Trade

* Miss Collet (*Report, The Employment of Women*, p. 88) quotes a witness who stated that her fines sometimes exceeded her premiums. "Anyone," added this witness, "who left the counter on account of illness was fined for absence."

† Miss Collet (*ibid.* p. 88) states that "in the majority of cases a moment's notice [of dismissal] was the rule. No wages are in the

Union among shop assistants is probably the only measure that can avail to check such injustice.

Long Hours.—The most trying feature of a shop assistant's life, however, is the long hours of labour. Upon this point agitation is at present centred, and rightly, since the length of the working day is not only an evil in itself, but renders the other ills which assistants suffer more difficult to bear and less easy to remove. In order to amend the conditions of their life assistants must have leisure to combine, for nothing breaks the spirit like unceasing toil. At present, as was pathetically remarked by a shop assistant, "counter and bed is the common lot of most of us," and energies enfeebled by a long day's work are unequal to grappling with the problem of reform. Both sexes work under the same conditions; women keep the same long hours as men; nor would they regard with approval special legislation in their favour, fearing lest the indirect result of such legislation should be to restrict their employment. How far such a result is really probable it is not easy to say. The Secretary of the Early Closing Association, giving evidence before the Select Committee on the Shop Hours Regulation Bill (1892), expressed himself satisfied that the limitation of women's hours proposed by the Bill would not prejudice their employment; but though

latter case paid in lieu of notice, and the only provision to secure that they shall not be absolutely penniless when they leave is the retention by the employer of the first week or fortnight's wages, which are paid to them on dismissal. The matron of a home said that in one case a shop assistant who came to her was unable to obtain even this from her former employer. The power to dismiss at a moment's notice is not merely reserved for grave offences, but seems to be frequently exercised on most trivial grounds," and the examples given by Miss Collet fully bear out the truth of the statement.

the contention is probably correct as far as the drapery trade is concerned, it is by no means certain that it would hold good of other trades, and women cashiers and clerks would certainly be replaced by men in shops where the latter are most largely employed. On the other hand, the greater cheapness of women's labour might enable it to keep its place. It is probable, however, that in any case the restriction would be used as an excuse for lowering women's wages still further.

The act of 1886 limited the hours of children employed in shops to seventy-four; but as no provision was made for inspection to enforce it, the act became a dead letter. The Act of 1892 extended the benefits of restricted hours to "young persons," but left the appointment of inspectors optional. A few large towns are enforcing the Act by appointing inspectors. As, with these exceptions, each employer is free to do what seems right in his own eyes, shop hours vary indefinitely, and it is impossible to give any figures that are of universal application. An assistant giving evidence before the Select Committee stated that in Chelsea, Fulham, and Hammersmith she had worked from 88 to 90 hours a week, but in Holloway only 63½. Other cases as bad, or even worse, might be cited. A representative of the Early Closing Association estimated the average hours in the southern and eastern districts of London at from 75 to 91 per week, but I am inclined to think this estimate exaggerated.* London shops in the

* Miss Collet's tables give 50 to 74 hours, exclusive of meals, but no attempt is made to find the average hours. And, as Miss Collet remarks, "those working long hours are most inaccessible. from the very fact that they have no time to go to social meetings, and have less courage to complain." Miss Orme gives the average hours in Welsh shops at 54¾ a week, the highest being 62½ and the lowest 51½.

poorer districts however are great sinners in the matter of late hours. As a rule hours are shortest in the central districts of large towns, since the exodus of the wealthier classes to the suburbs as evening comes on renders it useless to keep shops open after six or seven o'clock. Saturday afternoon's holiday is gained in the same manner. As we move towards the suburbs, and towards the working class districts, the hours become longer, and on Saturday, instead of the desired half holiday, toil is prolonged far into the evening, it may be even till midnight. In Manchester, which is said to stand well on the whole from the shop assistant's point of view, the hours in the central district are about 66 to 68 weekly, in some few cases 50 only, and in the suburbs 80; but in many parts of the city much longer hours are kept, and late Saturday night shopping prevails in the working class districts. To some extent this is inevitable; but in a city like Manchester, where the Saturday half-holiday is general, such extremely late shop hours can hardly be necessary, and with regard to other towns also the necessity of late hours for the shopping of the working classes is probably much exaggerated. It is well known that so long as shops are open customers will come, and if purchases could be made at three o'clock in the morning, individuals would probably be found who preferred that time to any other. The Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Shop Hours Regulation Bill of 1888, reported that they were "satisfied that the hours of shop assistants range in many places as high as from eighty-four to eighty-five hours per week," and were further "convinced that such long hours must be generally injurious and often ruinous to health, and that the same amount of business might be compressed into a shorter

space of time. Eighty-five hours too, as we have seen, are by no means the extreme limit of weekly work. It is a common thing for shops opened at eight in the morning to be kept open until nine o'clock at night; and what chance, it may be asked, has a girl released at that hour after a long day's toil of enjoying healthy recreation? A rational life is impossible under such conditions.

Standing.—The long hours of standing are of course apt to be injurious to the health of women, and especially of young girls. Physicians give evidence of diseases contracted in this manner, and the report of the "Sanitary Commission" of the *Lancet*, though moderate in expression, is sufficiently explicit upon this point.* It must be remembered, however, that constitutions differ, and I have been informed by a young woman who had served ten years in a shop (where, however, short hours are kept) that while she herself had grown used to the standing, her sister, serving in the same shop, was quite unable to endure the fatigue, and had failed seriously in health. A few years ago some well-meaning persons, urged on by the *Lancet*, exerted themselves to get seats provided for shop assistants, and their efforts were apparently successful. Subsequent investigations by the *Lancet* commissioner, however, disclosed a serious flaw in the arrangements. In one shop he found that although seats were provided anyone "found idle" was fined 6*d*. "At another very large establishment," reported the commissioner, "which boasts of the seats it provides, anyone found using them is reprimanded the first time, and dismissed on a repetition of the offence." The episode is instructive as showing how impossible it is for outsiders to

* The Report of the Lady Assistant Commissioners fully confirms the same opinion.

reform trade abuses. Shop assistants must themselves combine for the removal of their grievances if any improvement is to be effected. In the same way "consumers' leagues," for the avoidance of late shopping or for boycotting shops where sweating is carried on, are doomed beforehand to failure. Combination among the workers, backed by judicious legislation, is the only sure method of securing reform.*

Insanitary Conditions.—An evil almost as great as the long hours of labour is the insanitary condition of many shops. In large establishments proper arrangements are usually made, though it often happens that the building is draughty or ill-ventilated. But in small shops there is sometimes no sanitary provision whatever, and assistants must have recourse to the nearest public house, the only lavatory available. Shops that are merely "fronts" have of course no offices attached, and in those built on to private houses the proprietor often reserves the house premises entirely for his own family. The abuse is a crying one, and from its nature it is difficult to expose. Small shops are also often close, ill-ventilated, and full of foul odours, though perhaps women do not suffer from the latter cause as much as men, being less employed in provision shops, pawnbrokers', or fur shops. Women cashiers, however, who are confined all day in the elevated boxes rendered necessary by the rolling ball system of giving change, suffer severely from the accumulation of gas and bad air towards the ceiling.

* An ingenious method in use in some Welsh towns deserves notice. Shops which are kept open late are picketed by men carrying cards, on which is printed, "You are requested to do your shopping before 7 p.m." Miss Orme had such a card handed to her at Swansea, and on enquiry found that the agitation thus raised by the National Union of Shop Assistants had been very successful in shortening hours.

Living-in.—Another matter with regard to which discontent is rapidly spreading is the system of compulsory "living-in," which prevails widely in drapery and large out-fitting establishments. This custom is, I believe, unknown in Scotland. A drapery firm in the North of England, for example, employs 300 assistants of both sexes, and all are obliged to live in the house provided by the employer. In shops where "living-in" is compulsory board and lodging is usually valued at £40 per annum. It is a common complaint, however, among assistants that if after some years' service they obtain the privilege of living "out" they only receive an allowance of £15 or £20 per annum. This statement has been made over and over again, and its truth can hardly be doubted. For the sum charged by the employer the inmates of a large house ought to be comfortably fed and housed; but though in some cases the arrangements are all that could be desired, yet against the majority grave accusations are made with regard to overcrowding, bad food, and uncomfortable household arrangements.* The bed-room accommodation is said to be insufficient, and the furniture scanty; the food provided is often poor, and sometimes uneatable. Sundry small filchings in the shape of charges for blacking boots, use of piano and library, are also strongly resented. There is seldom any provision for social life, perhaps because there would be no time to enjoy it. Usually the two sexes are lodged apart, but some boarding houses are apparently mixed, for in one set of house rules it is stated that talking in the dining-room during meals is "strictly prohibited," that the young men are not permitted to enter the young ladies' sitting-room, and visitors are not

* The Lady Commissioners' reports are full of these complaints.

allowed in the house. At most establishments only twenty minutes or half-an-hour is allowed for dinner, and the assistants are liable to be called off if required in the shop. On this system meals must be simply bolted, to the no small injury of the digestion; and it is not surprising that dyspeptic derangement is a common ailment of shop assistants.

Sundays.—When Sunday comes round a diametrically opposite policy is followed, and after being kept in close confinement during six days of the week the unhappy assistant finds himself or herself put outside the door on the seventh. Either the boarders are given to understand that their presence is not desired within doors, or else no meals are provided, and the assistants are left to shift for themselves as best they may. No doubt the best-conducted houses are careful of their assistants' comfort on Sundays. Extreme cases, in which the assistants are absolutely shut out, are probably rare; but some are known to exist, and the tendency to make Sunday an uncomfortable day for those who remain indoors appears to be pretty general. The disastrous consequences of throwing female assistants —often mere girls—upon their own resources on the day in the week when respectable means of shelter or refreshment are least accessible can easily be imagined. Here again a strong Trade Union seems to afford the only possible chance of dealing with the evil. The stress of competition is ever at work, driving employers to diminish their expenses in every possible way in order to sell their wares at the cheapest rate; and it is so easy to effect the needful economies out of the domestic establishment of their assistants. It will be readily perceived too that the system of compulsory "living-in" places the assistants

more completely in the power of their employers than is desirable for any body of workers, and the assistants themselves do not hesitate to affirm that this is the chief cause of its maintenance. Incidentally also it disfranchises the men, who are not able to claim even the lodgers' franchise. Attempts are made in some places by philanthropic societies to provide homes for girls employed in shops where living-in is not compulsory. These may be useful in some cases, but their usual defect is a too maternal government, which the girls resent.

Personal Narratives.—In support of what has been here stated as to the general conditions of shop work, I may add some particulars gleaned from one or two lady shop assistants who have been kind enough to tell me frankly their experience. Both are now employed in shops with whose management they are perfectly content, but their previous experiences were of a far less agreeable nature. Miss Smith served for some time in a drapery establishment in a second-rate quarter of a large town. The hours were from 9 a.m. to 9.30 p.m., and to 10, 10.30, or later on Saturdays. No annual holidays were given; the assistants were supposed to have one free day a month, but often they did not get it. An hour was allowed for dinner, which the assistants had to provide either in or out of the building. As my informant's home was half an hour distant she brought her own dinner, and thus was unable to have warm food. When engaged in the millinery department she divided her time between the showroom and the workroom, and was often kept until 12.30 on Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning, finishing orders. Her sister had been similarly employed in a small country town for eighteen months, during most of which time the

working hours were so long that from Monday morning until Sunday morning she only left the counter for bed. "At the end of the time," added Miss Smith, "she was carried home in blankets," having broken down completely under the hard conditions of her life. "Country shops," remarked Miss Smith, "are the worst of all; the work is never at an end." Asked if she had ever found deficient sanitary arrangements, she stated that in an otherwise well-managed shop the housekeeper had at one time, from some whim, taken to locking the lavatories, opening them only at certain intervals. The rebellion that ensued, however, had forced her to relinquish the practice. Some small shops, it was added, were "merely square rooms," and were unprovided with offices.

Miss Jones had had a varied experience. In her first situation—a suburban shop, where she lived in the house—the hours were from 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m., with the usual additional hour on Saturday. "I always went straight to bed after my work," she said, "for there was only the kitchen to sit in, and one could not go out at that time of night." A large second-class shop in a provincial town was not much better. The hours were from 8.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., twenty minutes being allowed for dinner, and a quarter of an hour for tea. A week's holiday was given in summer. The assistants lived in the house; no talking was allowed at meals; and if, as was not unnatural among a gathering of young people of both sexes, the place of conversation was supplied by giggling, the "governor" seated at the head of the table growled his disapprobation. "Our only amusement was to kick each other under the table to make one another laugh," observed Miss Jones; "but where I am now we talk as much as we like, and

enjoy ourselves." In the first-named establishment there were many fines, in the house as well as in the shop. Four girls slept in a bedroom, two in each bed; if the gas was left lit after a certain hour, the room-mates were all fined 6*d.* a head, innocent and guilty alike.

My informants laid stress upon the time taken up by straightening the shop after closing hours, an extra burden which is sometimes unavoidable. In a shop which closed at 6.30 Miss Jones had sometimes been busy "straightening" gloves (*i.e.* arranging them in their boxes and sorting the sizes) till 10 o'clock or even later. At sale times such extra work is frequent. Neither speaker objected to the system of fines if reasonably administered, but they thought it hard to be fined for not making a sale when the article demanded was actually not in stock. About the pressure put upon assistants to effect sales they had some amusing stories. On one occasion a buyer brought a lady customer to the counter where Miss Jones was serving, with the request that she would show her "furniture fringes," adding in a low tone, "And see that she gets them." Miss Jones, who knew that furniture fringes were not in the shop, was at her wits' end. "I showed her everything I could think of," she said, "and kept her there until I saw the buyer move away, when I whispered hastily, 'We *haven't got* any furniture fringes,' and the lady took her departure. Fortunately the buyer forgot to ask me any questions afterwards. Another time a lady asked for a kind of beaded dress front which we did not keep; but because I let her go without calling up the buyer I was fined 2*s.* 6*d.*"

The details here given from personal experience amply bear out what has been said about the difficulties and disagreeables of a shop assistant's life, and they may be

multiplied *ad infinitum* by anyone who cares to make personal investigation into the subject.

Warehouses.—The conditions of life in warehouses are much the same as in shops, but some of the special grievances of the latter are absent. Fines, though not wholly unknown, are not customary, and "living-in," though practised to some extent, especially among London city firms, is not general throughout the country. Women are much employed in furriers' and trimming warehouses. Wages are poor—often only from 7*s.* to 10*s.* a week; but a good saleswoman in a wholesale house may earn as much as £1 a week. Long hours, poor wages, and insanitary conditions are the chief grievances of warehouse assistants, and they are making common cause with workers in shops for their removal.

Combination among Assistants.—Strenuous efforts are now being made to secure combination among shop assistants, but the task is not easy. Shop assistants are apt to regard such measures as suitable only to artisans and labourers, failing to perceive that from lack of combination they themselves are often much worse treated than the labourers whose methods of self-defence they despise. No artisan would think for a moment of enduring the conditions with regard to fines, forms of agreement, and method of living, which are imposed upon shop assistants, whose hours of labour are also, as I have shown, far beyond those worked by factory "hands."* The fear of dismissal is a more real cause for hesitation; but if the union is carefully organised, and causes of offence are avoided during its early days, there

* Miss Collet's tables of factory and shop hours (Report, p. 85) corroborate this statement.

seems no reason why this objection should not gradually disappear. There are now in existence the "United Shop Assistants' Union," the "National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks," with head-quarters in London, and branches in most of the large towns, and the "National Union of Clerks"; besides an outside society, the "Early Closing Association," which works for one special object—the shortening of shop hours. The others are unions for mutual help and defence, and the "National Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks," which has about 2,000 members, is constituted upon genuine Trade Union lines, giving sick benefits and out-of-work pay upon a graduated scale for payments of 1*s.* 2*d.* to 2*s.* a month.

The passing of the Shop Hours Regulation Act can hardly be expected to effect any general improvement in shop hours; but if efficiently carried out it should do something to shorten the working hours of those for whom it is specially designed—children and young persons. It is satisfactory to note that several towns are appointing inspectors, without whose aid the Act would remain nugatory, and that a number of women are among those appointed. It is highly improbable that public opinion will rest content with such a very imperfect piece of work as the Act of 1892; and before long we may expect to see the working hours of all shop assistants limited by law. If the coming legislation affects all shops alike (with necessary exceptions for special trades, such as chemists), it is not likely to meet with strong opposition, since it is the competition of one shopkeeper with another which forms the chief obstacle to a voluntary change. Often the refusal of a single shopkeeper prevents the

adoption of early closing in a whole district. If all are obliged to close no injury is done, and large employers of labour gave evidence in this sense before the Select Committee. Happily, in this case, the question admits of being considered upon its own merits, and we need not fear the appearance of that familiar hindrance to labour reform, the bugbear of foreign competition.

ADDENDUM.

This chapter was written before the publication of the Blue Book on "The Employment of Women," which contains detailed and valuable reports upon the work of shop assistants by Miss Orme and Miss Collet. As the evidence given above is fully confirmed by the Commissioners' Reports, I have left the chapter as it stood, with the addition of a few foot-notes, as an independent contribution to the study of the question. Those who wish to pursue the matter further may do so profitably by reading the Reports in full. I cannot leave the subject, however, without quoting Miss Collet's impressive summary of the effects of shop work and life upon the health of those employed (p. 88).

"The constant supervision of the shop walker, the patience and politeness to be shown to the most trying customers, the difficulty of telling the truth about the goods without incurring the displeasure of the managers, the long standing, the close atmosphere even in well-ventilated shops when crowded with customers, the short time for meals, the care required to keep things in their right places and to make out accounts correctly, the long evenings with gaslight, and the liability to dismissal without warning or explained reason, all tend to render the occupation of the shop assistants most trying to the nerves and injurious to health." And she adds: "It is a significant fact that whereas large numbers of factory girls cannot be prevailed upon to give up their factory work after marriage, the majority of shop assistants look upon marriage as their one hope of relief, and would, as one girl expressed it, 'marry anybody to get out of the drapery business.'"

CHAPTER III.

WOMEN AND TRADE UNIONS.

No existing combination outside Manual Labour—Beginning of Unionism among women—Emma Paterson—Sketch of her life—She advocates combination—Conference—Women's Protective and Provident League, formed 1874—First Women's Union, Bookbinders, 1874—Approval of Trades Congress, 1874—Women Delegates to Congress, 1875—Other Unions formed up to 1879—Army Clothing Factory—Liverpool Tailoresses — Nailmakers — *Women's Union Journal* — Death of Mrs. Paterson, 1886—The Match Girls' Strike, 1889—Public Sympathy—New Organisations—Unionism in the Provinces —Mixed Unions—Tours undertaken by League Officials—Method of Proceeding—Difficulties of Unionism—Fines and deductions—Attitude of Men's Unions—Increased Support—Established results and Future Prospects — Factory and Homework — Working for Pocket-money — Foreign Competition — "Consumers' League" — Self Help—*Directory of Women's Unions.*

THE history of combination among women lies within a narrow compass. Its action has been confined entirely to the working classes, and even among them the period of its existence is as yet but short. No organization fulfilling the purposes of a Trade Union is to be found among women of the cultured classes, and the corporations by which professional and commercial men secure the maintenance of a definite system of employment and a fixed standard of payment have no parallel among workers of the other sex. So far as women join the ranks of a pro-

fession already thus guarded—as, for instance, the medical profession—they share its privileges, and we are thus spared the spectacle of women doctors underselling their male colleagues, and earning their maledictions thereby. There are various associations of women engaged in teaching, but these as a rule are formed purely for educational purposes, and are powerless to defend or protect their members in any way. Indirectly, however, they may serve some of the purposes of a Trade Union. Thus the Association of Assistant Mistresses in secondary schools, though carefully disclaiming all title to be called a Trade Union, is able, by means of friendly conferences with headmistresses as well as by the information it disseminates among its members, and the publicity which it is able to give to matters in which their interests are concerned, to confer upon its members some of the minor benefits of combination. The National Union of Teachers in elementary schools (men and women) comes much nearer to the Trade Union type; but though affording its members valuable aid, and able through its Parliamentary Committee seriously to influence legislation, it is not constituted upon a Trade Union basis, and does not profess to fulfil its functions. The associations recently formed among men and women employed in shops are, however, Trade Unions, both in intention and in fact; but with this solitary, though important, exception, the progress of unionism among women has been entirely confined to the classes engaged in strictly manual labour.

Emma Paterson.—There is no difficulty in fixing the date of the first beginnings of Trades Unionism among women, or in assigning the credit of its foundation to the right quarter. The date was 1874, and the founder was

Emma Paterson, *née* Smith. I am here speaking of purely women's unions, for it must not be forgotten that large unions of men and women had existed for many years in the textile trades of the North of England. Emma Smith was the daughter of a schoolmaster, and was carefully educated by her father. She gained early practice in organisation in connection with the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, and gave such evidence of talent in this direction that when only nineteen she was appointed assistant secretary. After five years' service Emma Smith became Secretary of the Women's Suffrage Association, and her early practical experience, combined with the theoretical discussions upon the position of women to which she was now introduced, led her to think seriously about their industrial position also. In 1873 Miss Smith became Mrs. Paterson, and with her husband, a former hon. secretary of the Institute previously mentioned, and hardly less interested than herself in labour questions, she started for a tour in America, undertaken partly with a view to studying the operations of Friendly Societies in that country. She had been deeply struck with some remarks that had fallen from an American lady lecturer upon this subject, and the idea of a similar organisation at home for women took root and germinated in her thoughtful mind. In America she learnt with interest that experiments in women's unions had already been made, and showed some prospect of success. On her return to England Mrs. Paterson wrote a paper, which was published in the *Labour News*, advocating the formation of a national union for improving the position of working women. The article contained a careful *resumé* of the question, and showed that the writer possessed a thorough insight into her subject.

It was pointed out that women are almost always worse paid than men, even when equally skilled; that their isolation as workers exposes them to reductions of wages from unscrupulous employers, which their more honourable rivals are compelled to imitate. In support of the "benefit" side of Unionism Mrs. Paterson cites a curious case. "At a time of great slackness of trade among the bookbinders, in 1871, caused by a delay in passing through the House of Commons the revised Prayer Book, it was stated that during sixteen months two of the men's unions had paid £2,500 in relieving their unemployed members, but that the women in the trade, having no union to fall back upon, had suffered the greatest distress." Mrs. Paterson then deals with the popular scepticism as to women's powers of combination. "At three successive annual congresses of leaders and delegates of Trades Unions the need of women's unions has been brought before them, and each time someone present has asserted that women *cannot* form unions. The only ground for this assertion," adds Mrs. Paterson courageously, "appears to be that women *have not* yet formed unions. Probably they have not done so because they have not quite seen how to set about it."

Women's Protective and Provident League.—The first result of Mrs. Paterson's paper was that a conference was convened to consider her proposal. Many friends outside the ranks of labour attended the meeting held in the Quebec Institute on July 8th, 1874, at which Mr. Hodgson Pratt presided. Resolutions were passed to the effect—

1. That a Committee be appointed, to be entitled the Women's Protective and Provident Committee.

2. That one of the objects of the Association shall be to enable women earning their own livelihood to combine to protect their interests.

3. That it shall be one of the objects of the Association to provide a benefit fund for assistance in sickness and other contingencies.

A committee was elected, and Mrs. Paterson was appointed honorary secretary, a post which she held until her death in 1886.

The resolutions here quoted indicate sufficiently clearly the objects of the Association. It was considered necessary, however, not to proclaim these too loudly to a world unprepared for their reception, and accordingly the use of the term "Trade Union" was carefully avoided. Public opinion had not then been enlisted in favour of the principle of combination for either men or women; employers were not likely to regard amicably a further extension of the methods against which they had already fought so obstinately, and working men as a class had not yet grasped the importance, in the interests of labour generally, of the complete adoption of unionism by workers of both sexes. Their attitude was to some extent one of suspicion towards women, on account of their readiness to undersell the labour of men. It behoved the friends of the movement to walk guardedly, and to disarm suspicion until their cause had gained strength. The cumbrous title "Women's Protective and Provident League" first adopted, directed attention accordingly to one side only of the work—that of insurance against sickness—while veiling its trade union aspect under the vague adjective "protective." More stress was laid than would perhaps now be the case upon the advantage to be derived from

the sick benefit funds of the unions. The courage and hopes of the women were hardly raised to the point of making sacrifices for an organization of whose powers as a bulwark against oppression they were ignorant, but the prospect of receiving payment when out of work was something that the most timid could appreciate.

Bristol Association.—A Working Women's Association was founded in Bristol in 1874 upon similar lines to those of the League, and under the influence of the same inspiration, Mrs. Paterson having circulated her paper and attended a conference in that city. The society is still in existence.

Bookbinders' Union.—The progress made during the first year of the League's life was slow; but, as all who have watched the growth of social organisms are well aware, a period of struggle and slow progress is the unavoidable preliminary of growth in any movement which is firmly grounded. The Union of Women employed in Bookbinding was formed in 1874, and was followed next year by that of the Upholsteresses and the Shirt and Collar Makers, societies which are all still alive, though not large in numbers. The bookbinding trade was selected for the first experiment, partly because a recent period of trade depression had made the want of a provident society severely felt, but still more because Mr. King, the secretary of the London Consolidated Society of Bookbinders, undertook to give the women all the help in his power in the work of forming a trades union. "There is no provision," remarks the Report of the League's work for 1874, "for the admission of women as members of the men's societies either in bookbinding or other trades, with some few exceptions in the North of England. Nor

would the women be able to avail themselves of such provision, as they could not pay the same subscription, their wages seldom being more than half those of the men." Here we have the whole case in a nutshell—women completely unorganized, and disabled by their poverty from making use of the levers by which men had raised their position. It is gratifying to be able to add that several of the men's unions have recently admitted women at a lower rate of contribution. About the same time unions of women were formed in Dewsbury and also in Leicester, where, it was stated, the stitchers and seamers in the hosiery trade received only 5*s.* a week. A meeting was called by some gentlemen of the town who recognised the mischief of allowing wages to diminish unchecked, and a union was formed, which was able almost immediately to obtain for its members a small advance of wages.

Trades Congress, Liverpool.—In January, 1874, the Trades Congress met in Liverpool, and Mrs. Paterson addressed a letter to the members upon the subject of combination among women. The letter was read by the President (Mr. Julian), and the Congress expressed hearty approval of the movement. Meanwhile the Committee of the League busied itself in stimulating the young societies by means of social gatherings and entertainments, and by holding meetings and endeavouring to arouse public interest. A room was rented in Holborn, and was used for small meetings and as a house of call for women out of work.

Provincial Unions. Women Delegates to Congress.—In 1875 and the following year efforts were made by the League to organise working women in the provinces. Meetings were held in Glasgow, Manchester,

and Sheffield, and unions were formed in various trades; but though the co-operation of the local Trades Council was enlisted, not many of the societies then formed have survived. An event of more import was the admission of women to the Trades Congress at Glasgow in 1875, where Miss Simcox represented the Shirt and Collar Makers, and Mrs. Paterson the Bookbinders and the Upholstresses. A resolution pledging the members of the Congress to promote trades unions among women was moved by Mr. Shipton, of the London Trades Council, and carried unanimously. Since 1875 women have been present at each annual meeting of the Trades Congress, and have invariably been received with courtesy and goodwill. During the next few years unions of women were formed in London as follows:—

Tailoresses' Union . . .	1877
Dressmakers', Milliners', and Mantle Makers' Union . . .	1878
Westminster and Pimlico Branch of the Tailoresses' Union . . .	1879
East London Tailoresses' Union . .	1879

The societies thus formed were for the most part small, the total membership only reaching about 1,300 in 1879; but they held well together, and their financial position was sound. In 1879 the Society of Women employed in Bookbinding was able to report that after paying during the year benefits amounting to £37 10*s.* 6*d.*, a balance of £218 12*s.* remained in hand. The Upholsteresses' Society had paid £23 15*s.* in benefits, and had a balance of £98 18*s.* 6*d.* In all cases the societies had paid their own working expenses, the funds of the League being only employed in giving them a fair start.

Army Clothing Factory.—In 1879 the good offices of the League were employed in bringing the grievances of the women working in the Royal Army Clothing Factory at Pimlico under notice of the House of Commons, and in obtaining the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry. This is probably the first case in which the conditions of women's labour have been investigated at the request of the workers themselves. Similar grievances cropped up in 1882, and once more in 1885–6. The League, as before, took up the women's case, holding conferences and attracting public attention to the matter. The result was a searching inquiry into the management of the factory, undertaken by Mrs. Fawcett, at the request of Mr. Woodall, Surveyor-General of Ordnance. Mrs. Fawcett received the thanks of the Department for her labours, and the grievances of the women were in great part redressed.

Two trade societies were formed in Leicester in 1878–9—the Cigar Makers' and the Worsted Spinners'. Members of the Trades Council again gave their aid, and the unions thus formed still carry on, under changed names, a flourishing existence. In the autumn of 1878 five women attended the Trades Congress held in Bristol, at which a proposal for the appointment of working men and women as sub-inspectors of factories was carried unanimously. The question was brought up again at the Congress of 1881, and at the instance of the League Parliament was approached on the subject.*

Results in 1882.—For some years the work of

* It was not until 1893 that two ladies—Miss Abraham and Miss Muirhead Paterson—were appointed factory inspectors. No working women have yet been appointed.

forming Women's Unions went on but slowly, and in London, though persistent efforts were made, no new societies were permanently established between 1879 and 1888. By 1882 it was found that the seven London unions had received £1210 in members' subscriptions, and had paid away £475 in sick benefits and grants at death. The total number of unions formed by the League was stated in 1883 to be nineteen, ten in London, and nine in the provinces. Meetings were held in many towns, and a few unions were formed, among which may be mentioned a Working Women's Society in Oxford, founded in 1881. In Liverpool the Tailoresses' Union would have collapsed but for the help of the League, and the case affords a good example of the dangers with which the work of combination is beset. The union was not constituted in a business-like manner, and the member of the men's union (afterwards expelled), who was allowed to act as secretary and treasurer, "neglected," as the report euphemistically puts it, to place the funds in a bank. Suspicion at once took possession of the society, and subscriptions ceased. The League promptly came to the rescue, deposited a sum equal to the subscriptions in a local bank on behalf of the society, and took means, which were eventually successful, for obtaining repayment from the secretary.

Nailmakers.—Attention was drawn in 1883 to the wretched wages earned by women in the nailmaking trade, by Mr. Broadhurst's bill (promoted by the Parliamentary committee of the Trades Congress), prohibiting the employment in that trade of girls under 14. The bill was thrown out, but the fact of its having been brought in roused the women to a sense of their position, and an effort was made to form a union under the auspices of the League. Wages

were then quoted at 3*s.* to 5*s.* a week. A large number of women nailmakers are now enrolled in the Midland Trades Federation, which contains altogether 1500 women. Unionism in the nail and chain trades has fluctuated greatly, for the difficulties in the way of combination are very great. Both Mr. Burnett's Report to the Board of Trade and Miss Orme's to the Labour Commission, show a wretched condition of life and labour in these districts.

It will be seen that the record of combination among women, where the support of men's unions has not been available, is to some extent a history of abortive attempts. The experience thus gained, however, has not been wholly thrown away. It has shown where the attempt is likely to succeed, and where it is not. As a result, effort is now being concentrated on the most favourable fields, and recent events have shown the wisdom of this course. In spite of many failures, the examples of successful combination are sufficiently numerous to prove that the task of organising women's labour, if difficult, is by no means hopeless.

Women's Union Journal.—Among other agencies promoted or encouraged by the League during its early years were a monthly paper called the *Women's Union Journal* (now issued quarterly as the *Women's Trades Union Review*), a reading-room, where women out of work could consult advertisements, and employers send notices of vacancies, a swimming club (which owed its formation to the horror caused by the sinking of the *Princess Alice* in the Thames), a small co-operative society, and contributions towards a seaside house for members of the Unions.

Death of Mrs. Paterson.—At the end of the year 1886 the unions suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Mrs. Paterson, Her husband, who had been one of

the earliest members of the League, and took the warmest interest in its progress, had died a few years before. Almost since her girlhood, as we have seen, Mrs. Paterson had striven hard for the advancement of working women, and her death, at the early age of thirty-eight, was attributed by her friends to her unwearying labours. She had been honorary secretary of the League from its foundation, and since 1875 had attended every meeting of the Trades Congress but one, besides giving unremitting attention to the affairs of the individual unions. Mrs. Paterson exercised a great influence over the working women with whom she came in contact, and she possessed two qualities which are not always found together—enthusiasm for an ideal and great business powers. To her quiet yet persistent efforts it is due that the movement did not collapse amid the many difficulties of its early years, and that the idea of Trades Unionism among women has been steadily kept alive. For a short time after Mrs. Paterson's death, Miss Clementina Black held the post of secretary to the League, but resigned in 1889, and became connected with a new organization, similar in aim, called the "Women's Trades Union Association." Her place was taken by Miss Emilie Holyoake, daughter of the well-known co-operator, Miss Florence Routledge, B.A., becoming honorary secretary.

Match-Girls' Strike.—The years 1888 and 1889 marked a great upheaval in the labour market. The first saw the match-girls' strike, the second the dockers' strike. The great silent mass of struggling, starving, unskilled labour then for the first time found voice, and its utterance, expressed in the unmistakable terms of a deadly struggle, and following hard upon the revelations made before the Commission on the Sweating System, brought home

to the outside world the real state of things prevailing in the lower ranks of labour. Thus the public mind was prepared to show something more than passive sympathy with the rebellion which broke out soon afterwards among unskilled labourers. The strike of the girls in Messrs. Bryant and May's factory, though dwarfed in interest by the dockers' strike which followed, was still a remarkable episode, unique indeed in the history of combination among women. The beginning of the strike found the girls entirely without organization, its close left them with increased wages, a union nearly a thousand strong, and for some time afterwards considerably in excess of that figure. The strikers were ably and courageously led by Mrs. Annie Besant and Mr. Herbert Burrows, and their success was also due in no small degree to the support of the London Trades Council, which took the part of the girls, and sent a deputation to press their claims upon the firm. By thus gaining over public sympathy and winning the open countenance of the official element in Trades Unionism the match-girls' strike may be said to have marked a new departure, for, though similar help had often been rendered by Trades Councils before, the publicity attached to this occasion made it specially noteworthy. Public opinion, too, though a fickle friend, is still a friend worth having, and whilst its frown is a penalty which employers do not willingly incur, its restraining effect upon hasty action on the other side is also not without benefit. A certain vague sentiment with regard to the physical weakness of women and their patience under poverty and suffering helps to keep public opinion favourable on the whole, while their disorganized condition prevents them, as a rule, from adopting the aggressive measures

which shock and terrify society. So for the present the outside world looks kindly upon women's unions, the more so as these organisations make no demands upon its purse.

New Unions. Women's Trades Union Association.—Between 1888 and 1890 a number of new unions, including the Amalgamated Laundresses with several branches, Matchbox-makers of Shoreditch and Bow, Box-makers and Confectioners, were formed in London. Of these some were formed under the auspices of the new association mentioned above, the Women's Trades Union Association. This society aims at promoting unions whose funds shall be devoted solely to trade purposes, contributions for sick and out-of-work benefits being either optional or non-existent. In the opinion of those who formed the new society the starvation wages paid to women in many trades render it difficult, if not impossible, to secure subscriptions upon a scale high enough to allow for sick benefits, and they consider it best therefore to devote attention entirely to strengthening the workers' position in their respective trades. There is something to be said for this view of the question, and it is possible that, following the lines of the "new unionism," women's societies may come into existence which would hardly have been formed upon any other method. Some belonging to the older organisation, as, for instance, the Matchbox-makers' Union, have already adopted a purely trade basis for combination. The majority however give sick and out-of-work benefits, and in many districts the "club" aspect of a union is that which appeals most strongly to women unexperienced in combination. The question is one with which men's unions are much occupied at present, and its final solution cannot be foretold as yet.

Mixed Unions in the Provinces.—Meanwhile unionism has been spreading in the provinces, which offer a better field for combination than the ill-paid trades of East London, to which the efforts of the League had hitherto been directed. Some of the larger unions of men in the textile trades, as already mentioned, had long admitted women as members, such as the Northern Counties Weavers' Association with 43,000 women members, and the Card and Blowing-room Operatives with 21,000 women. The Amalgamated Hosiery Union of Leicester has 2500, and the Scottish Mill and Factory workers the same number. The Notts and Leicester Cigarmakers' union is an admirable example of a purely women's society which early learned to stand on its feet, and was able to gain signal advantages for its members. It has a membership of 800, and is said to contain a larger percentage of those engaged in the trade than any other society. There are unions of women, either of a general or special kind, in Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Wakefield, Denton (where a union in the hat trade contains 4290 members), Glasgow, Belfast, and other towns. Particulars of their membership are given in an appendix. It will be seen that by far the largest number of women unionists are enrolled in the mixed societies of the textile trades. These constitute the models to which in time unionism will probably more generally conform in the future, since an organisation which includes both men and women is free from the sources of weakness attaching to unions of either sex singly. When the women of a trade are not included in the union, they are liable to undersell the men, and unions of women alone are necessarily weaker than the better equipped organisations of men. For the present, however,

it is necessary to be content with imperfect forms of combination, and if women are ever to win a place in the older and stronger societies of men they must first give evidence of their quality by forming and managing their own unions. Every year those who make the effort are gaining increased support from the men's unions, and in time there can be no doubt that the cause of labour will be seen to have no distinction of sex.

System of Tours.—The growth of provincial unions has been much quickened by the policy recently adopted by the League,—now called the Women's Trades Union League. A scheme of annual tours has been mapped out, by which the officials of the League are enabled to visit periodically districts in which unions are forming, or are likely to be formed. Sometimes the men's unions send to ask for the help of the League to organise the women, whose readiness to accept lower wages they recognise as a serious danger to the position of labour as a whole. Often the women themselves send a request for help, and occasionally outsiders have invited the League to come and rouse the impoverished and helpless workers of a district. Interest in the subject is sometimes awakened by a discussion at a political meeting, and various clubs and associations have from time to time invited a member of the League's Committee to give an address upon women's unions. If after some such beginning the ground seems ready for working, and especially if the local Trades Council advises, a meeting of women is called, and the officials of the League, aided by such friendly supporters as the district may afford, explain the advantages of combination. Afterwards the names of those willing to join a union are taken down, and a date is arranged for a business meeting,

at which officers are chosen and rules formed. Members of the Trades Council are generally present at the second meeting, to put the women in the way of arranging their affairs. The society is now formed, and it may seem that everything is going well; but the difficulties in the way of successful unionism among a class so poor and so unaccustomed to the methods of combination as the majority of working-women are very great, and it is often found that in a few months membership has dwindled to a small number, and the hopeful prospects of the opening weeks have entirely disappeared. Often the committee is not up to its work, accounts are badly kept, or the collectors are unable to arrange a good working method for getting in subscriptions, a matter which is by no means easy when the employers or their managers and foremen happen to view the formation of the union with disfavour. Then again, if, as sometimes happens, suspicion arises that the hard-earned funds are being mismanaged, the union will melt away as if by magic, to be re-organised only with great difficulty. In order to avoid this danger as far as may be, and to give the newly-formed union an incentive to perseverance, the League promises a second visit at the end of a year to those societies which affiliate themselves to the central body. A plan of spring and autumn tours has been arranged, and by grouping a number of industrial centres in one part of the country the emissaries of the League have been enabled to cover much more ground than would have been possible in a series of detached visits. In this manner Lady Dilke, Miss Routledge, Miss Holyoake, and others, have visited most of the manufacturing districts of England and Scotland, and have even carried their missionary enterprise as far as Belfast, where,

since the Trades Congress of 1893 great efforts have been made to organise the labour of the women working in the linen and flax mills. Many of the unions thus formed are affiliated to the League, including a number in Scotland and the large mixed union of West Riding Power-Loom Weavers, who have joined the League as far as their women members are concerned. Recently a further step has been taken, by sending out working women who have had experience in their own unions, as organisers into districts where new unions are being formed; and it is expected that this plan will be found extremely useful, as women who are already overworked and underpaid have little strength or leisure for arranging the preliminaries of organisation.

Difficulties of Combination.—The difficulty of forming unions among women is undeniably great. Women are inexperienced in combination, and they entertain a lively and by no means groundless fear of the resentment of their employers. Unionism does not, it is true, often meet with opposition from the better class of employers, who recognise in it a salutary check on the efforts of unscrupulous rivals to force down both prices and wages. Experience shews them, too, that unionism discourages rather than fosters strikes, and in cases of difficulty they would often prefer to deal with the accredited representatives of the workpeople. But in many cases the attempt to form a combination among women meets with the open hostility of their employers. It is not uncommon for a woman who has undertaken the secretaryship of a union to be summarily dismissed. The manager of a confectionery factory in a large provincial town recently attempted to turn away all those who had given in their names to a newly-formed

union. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that women, especially in the worst paid trades, are afraid to join a trade union, and that even after joining they readily fall away from an undertaking which may possibly involve so serious a risk. If working women throughout the country were dominated by this fear the cause of unionism would be hopeless; but fortunately this is not the case, and we can only admire the courage which enables women earning a miserable pittance to risk its loss by identifying themselves with an unpopular movement. If the union were strong it would of course set its face against arbitrary dismissals, which are in themselves a powerful argument in favour of organisation; but the difficulty is to prevent their occurrence during the early years of the union. On this account it is useful, where possible, to collect a fund for the relief of women who may be temporarily thrown out of work owing to their active connection with a trade union; and the knowledge that such a fund exists helps in itself to prevent the occasion for its employment arising. The general public has little idea of the extent to which unscrupulous employers take advantage of the helpless position of working women. So widely separated are classes in this country that a man may grind the faces of the poor and pass for a saint among those of his own class. An employer remarked recently to a friend who was advocating unions for women that they were not necessary in his factory, as the women had already a fund to which they subscribed. Further questioning elicited the fact that the "fund" was derived from fines wrung from the women, and was managed entirely by the employers. The firm is known for zeal and munificence in connection with religious bodies, and the case is by no means an isolated one.

It is impossible to read the Report of the Lady Assistant Commissioners without becoming convinced that combination is absolutely necessary, if working women are to secure a reasonable modification of the scandalous fines and deductions to which their wages are subjected. The extent to which these iniquities prevail is now fully revealed for the first time, and if the unions could attack this one point alone with success they would have done much to raise the economic status of working women.

Attitude of Men's Unions.—Much may be hoped for the future of unionism among women, from the increased support which it receives from the leaders of men's unions; indeed, it is not too much to say that herein lies the key to the position. It has often been cast in the teeth of Trades Unionists that while struggling for freedom for themselves they have regarded with indifference the economic position of their working sisters, and have exerted their influence rather for the restriction of women's labour than for the improvement of its conditions. It is a question, however, whether unionism in its early years, struggling hard to maintain its existence, could have undertaken the additional burden of organising the women. Sometimes the objections raised to women's work were exceedingly flimsy, and it is small credit to a section of working men that they have shown themselves ready to raise the cry of impropriety, and even immorality, against women upon grounds which cannot bear the test of examination. Even were the conditions of women's work such as ought not to be tolerated (and no one who knows the facts would say that this is never the case), the true cure lies in the formation of unions among the women, since one of the first things which a strong union would do

is to stand out for decent arrangements and reasonable conditions of work. The general public often joins in and swells the cry against some particular employment for women, instead of casting about to see if its defects cannot be remedied. Thus, when the agitation was raised a few years ago against the employment of women at the pit brows in Lancashire, the charge of immorality was most unjustly raised against them, and even their peculiar but necessary costume was made the ground of serious indictments. The force expended upon this agitation might, if more wisely directed, have secured for the women improved arrangements for their comfort, which in some cases were much needed; but nobody thought of this. Wider views, however, are now beginning to prevail, and the generous support which is given to the claims of women by the responsible leaders of working men may be expected gradually to disarm the hostility which undoubtedly exists among a section of their class.

Of late years Trades Councils have repeatedly come forward with both money and personal help to organise the labour of women—notably the Councils of Aberdeen, Liverpool, Oldham, Huddersfield, Leicester, and the Midland Counties Trades Federation. The Manchester and Salford Trades Council has also taken the matter up, and is engaged upon a systematic attempt to organise the female labour of the district. The result of the experiment will be watched with interest.

Results Established.—The history of unionism among women, brief though it be, may claim to have established the following points:

(1) That unions can be formed and carried on upon a firm financial basis even in trades in which wages are very low.

(2) That the demands of a trade union are often sufficient to secure for the workers a rise in wages or equivalent advantages, such as shorter hours or the abolition of fines. Miss Collet, in her report of the Liverpool district, mentions a union of tailoresses which succeeded in obtaining a shortening of eleven hours in the working week. In the lace trade Miss Abraham notes that "In two instances where fines seem to have been heavy, the formation of a trade union among the workers has had the effect of checking the system." Many other examples might be given.

(3) That unless unions are established, wages, especially in the less-skilled trades, tend to fall. The competition of one employer against another is generally sufficient in itself to bring about this result, unless the workers oppose a solid front to the pressure from above. The older members of badly-paid trades know this well, and it is among them that the keenest advocates of combination are found.

Factory and Home Work.—Trades carried on wholly in factories have hitherto proved the most amenable to combination. Low wages and irregular employment, though sufficiently serious obstacles, are not so prejudicial as the division of a trade into factory and home work, or the existence of domestic workshops. In those of Cradley Heath, near Birmingham, the isolation of the workers keeps down wages, and the home, instead of being saved by the workshop, as some would have us believe, is, upon the testimony of Miss Orme, Senior Assistant Commissioner, almost always "desolate." Where work is done wholly at home it is difficult to bring influence to bear upon the women to induce them to combine, and yet

it is here that combination is most necessary, since the workers have neither the support of companionship nor the protection of the Factory Acts. With regard to domestic workshops, it seems probable that legislation will in time bring these irregular divisions of the labour army into line with the main body. The first step has already been taken in the regulation which compels employers to post up a list of their outworkers. All progress in this direction is an aid to combination. In the joint influence of legislation and unionism, aided where necessary by a more efficient system of inspection, lies the chief hope of improvement in the less fortunate branches of labour.

An evil which appears to belong exclusively to women's labour is the custom, prevalent among girls whose parents are fairly well off, of working for pocket-money. Even where the parents are poor the cheapness of boarding at home often induces girls to work for a rate of wages which would be cruelly low for those who have to maintain themselves entirely. Miss Collet's report to the Labour Commission lays great stress on this point. In Bristol, girls working in a cigar factory often earn no more than 7*s.* 6*d.* or 9*s.* a week, pay 4*s.* or 5*s.* to their parents for weekly board, and seem "quite content" with their low wages. The disastrous effect of this policy upon the general standard of women's wages needs no explanation. It is sufficient to point out here that the practice forms a serious obstacle to successful combination among women.

Foreign Competition.—Foreign competition is often advanced as an argument against raising wages, and it cannot be denied that in some cases it has force. It is safe, however, to say that there is little warrant for its employment in wholesale condemnation of attempts to

raise wages in the worst-paid trades. We are told, for instance, that matches made in the east end of London are undersold by the still cheaper products of Sweden; yet match factories often pay high dividends, and it is well known that the profits in a trade bear little relation as a rule to the rate of wages paid to the workers. It is generally found that where work is concentrated in large factories under employers possessed of considerable capital fair wages are obtainable, and the wretched rate of payment which prevails in many of the East London trades is probably due more than is supposed to the hole-and-corner manner in which the business is carried on. Where foreign competition is not pressing, the necessity for producing cheap goods is often urged as a valid reason for abstaining from any efforts to secure reasonable wages for the producers. Desirable, however, as cheapness may be, it is possible to purchase its advantages too dearly. If the effect of combination among workers were to be a rise in the price of matches, slop clothing, or fancy boxes, the consumer would have little cause of complaint, and would soon acquiesce philosophically in the altered condition of things. Nor can purchasers, however well disposed toward the working classes, effect any change on their own account. Such devices as a "Consumers' League," whose members would bind themselves to deal only with firms paying a fair rate of wages, must obviously fail, or if conceivably successful must do as much harm as good until our means of obtaining information are much more perfect than they are at present. No such rough-and-ready way of forcing on reforms is of the slightest use; the workers themselves must improve their condition by slow and patient effort. Outsiders may aid and stimulate, but they cannot do the work.

DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S TRADES UNIONS,

WITH NUMBER OF MEMBERS, WHERE KNOWN.

Unions marked with an asterisk enrol both men and women. The numbers refer to women only.

LONDON UNIONS.

THE WOMEN EMPLOYED IN BOOKBINDING.—Secretary, Miss E. Whyte. 280.

SHIRT AND COLLAR MAKERS' SOCIETY.—Secretary, Mrs. Houlton. 50.

UPHOLSTERESSES' SOCIETY.—Secretary, Miss Mears. 35.

Office for the above Societies, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.

TAILORESSES' TRADE UNION.—Westminster and Pimlico Branch. Secretary, Mrs. Cooper, 7, Carnaby Street, W.

TAILORESSES' Auxiliary to the Amalgamated Society of Tailors. Secretary, Miss Hicks. 260.

DRESSMAKERS, MILLINERS, AND MANTLEMAKERS.—Secretary, Miss Addis, 129, Marylebone Road, N.W. 30.

CIGAR MAKERS' UNION.—Secretary, Mrs. Stanmore. Office, Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, Commercial Street, Whitechapel. 800.

MATCHBOX MAKERS' UNION.—Shoreditch. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Reilly, 63, Gloucester Street, Belgrave Road, S.W. 40.

MATCHMAKERS' UNION.—Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Besant, Avenue Road, N.W.

ROPEMAKERS' UNION.—Secretary, Mrs. Hicks, 28, Lyme Street, N.W.

PROVINCIAL UNIONS.

ABERDEEN: *Workmen and Workwomen's Society. Secretary, W. Johnston, 47, Belmont Street, Aberdeen. 100.

ALVA, N.B.: *Society of Associated Weavers. Secretary, John Jack, Town Hall, Alva. 220.

BIRMINGHAM: Women employed in the Bedstead Trade. Secretary, W. Mills, 3, Ford Street, Hockley.

BIRMINGHAM: Women's Trade Society. Joint Secretaries, Mrs. Steele, 93, King Edward's Road, and Mrs. Thomas, 112½, Govet Street.

BRIGHTON: Laundresses. Secretary, Mrs. Ford, 78, Livingstone Road.

BRISTOL Association of Working Women. Secretary, Miss Talbot, Oakfield Grove, Clifton. 39.

CARD AND BLOWING ROOM OPERATIVES, AMALGAMATED ASSOCIATION OF. General Secretary, W. Mullin, White's Chambers, Blue Boar Court, Market Place, Manchester. (21 branches.) 21,000.

DENTON: Association of Hat Trimmers and Wool Formers—Secretary, G. Wilde, 27, Seymour Street, Hyde. 4290.

DUNDEE: Mill and Factory Operatives' Union. Office, 4, Mid Street.

EDINBURGH: Women's Union.

HEYWOOD BRANCH OF N.C.A.W. Secretary, J. W. Ogden, Argyle Buildings.

LEICESTER: *Amalgamated Hosiery Union. Secretary, J. Holmes, Exchange Buildings. 2,500.

LEICESTER: *N. U. of Boot and Shoe Operatives. Secretary, W. Inskip, 17, Silver Street. 3,200.

LEEDS: Tailoresses. Secretary, Mrs. Panther, Exeter Street, Woodhouse Lane. 140.

LEEK: Union of Women Silk Workers. Secretary, William Stubbs; Assistant Secretary, Miss N. Shenton, 6, Haton Street.

LIVERPOOL: Bookfolders. Secretary, Margaret McConnell, 25, Bewley Street.

LIVERPOOL: Tailoresses' Coatmaking Union. Secretary, Mrs. Walker, 15, Jessamine Street.

LIVERPOOL: Tailoresses' Trade Society. Secretary, Mrs. Skelley, 28, Aber Street.

LIVERPOOL: Upholsteresses' Union. Secretary, Miss Owen, Cocoa Rooms, St. Luke's Place, Bold Street.

LIVERPOOL: *Cloth Cap and Hat Makers' Union.

MANCHESTER: Shirtmakers' Union and Federation of Working Women. Secretary, Mrs. M. Stretton, 24, Nelson Terrace, Brooks Bar. 300.

MIDLAND COUNTIES TRADES' FEDERATION. General Secretary, R. Juggins, 20, New Street, Darlaston, Wednesbury. (9 branches.) 1,500.

NOTTINGHAM: Cigar Makers' Union. Secretary, Mrs. Briant, 5, Birchin Street, Carrington. 800.

NOTTINGHAM: Women's Hosiery Union. Secretary, S. Bowers, East Street Schools.

NOTTINGHAM: Tailoresses' Union. Secretary, G. Noble, 11, St. Saviour's Street.

NOTTINGHAM: Women Lace Makers' Union. Secretary, H. Bartellot, Great Freeman Street. 370.

OXFORD: Protective and Provident Society of Women working in Trades. Secretary, Miss Farrant, 13, The Crescent. 80.

*SCOTTISH MILL AND FACTORY WORKERS FEDERAL UNION. Secretary, A. Whyte, Templars' Hall, Kirriemuir. 2,500.

STAFFORDSHIRE: Hanley. Women's Pottery Union. Secretary, James Bentley, Mission Hall Buildings, High Street, Hanley.

STAFFORDSHIRE: Burslem. Women's Pottery Union. Secretary, Mrs. Platt, 38, Brindley Street. 200.

SUNDERLAND: Paper Mill Workers Union. Secretary, R. Dale, 5, Albany Terrace, Commercial Road.

SHOP ASSISTANTS' UNION, NATIONAL. W. Johnson, General Secretary, 55, Chancery Lane, E.C. (30 branches.) 300.

*WEAVERS, NORTHERN COUNTIES AMALGAMATED ASSOCIATION OF. General Secretary, W. H. Wilkinson. Head Office, Endbank Chambers, Accrington. (29 branches.) 43,000.

*WEAVERS, WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE POWER LOOM ASSOCIATION OF. Secretary, Allen Gee. Head Office, Friendly and Trades Societies Club, Huddersfield. (20 branches.) 2,000.

*WEAVERS, UNION OF. Secretary, Edwin Hill, 55, Park Street, Trowbridge.

*WEAVERS. Yeadon, Guiseley, and District. H. Lockwood, North Terrace, Yeadon. 276.

WHITWORTH VALE BRANCH OF N.C.A.W. Secretary, Ralph Earlwood, Market Street, Shawforth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEXTILE TRADES.

CENTRES OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY: Lancashire and Yorkshire—Changes in general conditions—Reforms not final—EXTENT OF COMBINATION: Mixed Unions—Equal wages paid to weavers in the cotton trade—Contrast between Lancashire and Yorkshire—Lower scale for women in Yorkshire—Fines—SUPERVISION: Immorality—SYSTEM OF FINES: Deductions from wages—SANITATION: Defective arrangements—High temperature in cotton mills—Dangerous machinery—LABOUR OF MARRIED WOMEN: Child labour—Reforms needed—OTHER TEXTILE TRADES: Crape—Silk—Ribbons—Carpets—Hosiery—Lace—Linen—Unhealthy Conditions—Wages.

Centres of Textile Industry.—By far the largest demand for women's labour, next to household service, comes from the textile industry; and it is in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, where the cotton and woollen trades are carried on, that women's labour under the Factory system can best be studied. There are several departments of the textile trades, such as the silk industry, crape manufacturing, and carpet making, in which women are also largely employed; but it is in the great cotton mills of Rochdale, Oldham, Burnley, and Blackburn, the woollen mills of Huddersfield and Dewsbury, and the worsted mills of Bradford, that the great majority of women are to be found.

Changes in General Conditions.—The grievances of the women and children employed in the mills in the cotton trade were the subject of general discussion fifty years ago, and it was the exposure of the terrible conditions under which they worked, the excessive hours, the insanitary conditions, and their complete helplessness, that forced the hand of the various governments of the day, and enabled Lord Ashley to introduce his factory legislation. Since that time the country has heard but little of the lot of the mill operatives, but from time to time it appears that all is not as it should be. For instance, evidence was laid before the Labour Commission which shewed that the currently-accepted picture of the prosperity and comfort of the mill operatives was much too highly coloured. The representatives both of the women and of the men brought forward a mass of evidence shewing that the grievances to which the work-people were exposed were of the most real and vital kind. The wages in certain districts and departments might be good, but the over-driving, the speeding up of machinery, the high temperature maintained in the mills, the utterly inadequate provision made for the health of the work-people, and the prevalence of fines, all pointed to the conclusion that the factory legislation contemplated by Lord Ashley and his successors, and followed up from time to time almost to the present moment, presented no finality. The conditions of labour have, it is true, been transformed since those early days when we read of the operatives' deputation to Lord Palmerston. In order to demonstrate that working a mule was not an easy matter the operatives induced the Prime Minister to push a chair up and down the room in imitation of a spinner's motions. The hours of labour have

been shortened, but the intensity of labour has increased at an even higher rate. The strain upon the muscle and bodily strength may be less, but the nervous wear and tear, the mental strain, the storm and stress of the mill, have been also steadily increasing. The history of the troubles of the Lancashire and Yorkshire operative is not then a closed chapter; for that matter no department of industry in these days is or can be. Changes and improvements in manufacturing processes and machinery are so constant and sweeping that the worker is ever face to face with new problems, many of which, indeed, are directly due to the rising standard of his own life.

Extent of Combination.—Whilst Lancashire and Yorkshire afford the most instructive field for studying the influence of factory legislation upon labour, the information that may be gleaned there respecting combination as an element in the economic and social life of women is no less instructive. Side by side with one another you find two great kindred industries—the woollen and the cotton—and the level of one, so far as women are concerned, is far below that of the other. No explanation based on competition, either in commercial or labour markets, can account for this difference. The explanation must be sought, not in the ability of the individual or the working of the market, but in the extent and direction of the combination which exists among the operatives. It is certain that the operatives of Lancashire and Cheshire have shewn themselves far more alive to the benefits of combination than those of Yorkshire. The worker in the cotton mill, whether male or female, is a Trade Unionist almost as a matter of course, and though, as in the best organized of trades, a certain number still remain outside the pale of the union, those

who are inside are sufficiently strong, both in numbers and in practical effectiveness, to formulate the labour policy of the trade. There is a wide difference between formulating a policy and carrying it out in practice, but the organizations of the spinners, weavers, and card-room workers have been successful in making the two very nearly synonymous. Their leaders have been fully alive to the absurdity of attempting to carry through an heroic policy in the absence of effective co-operation on the part of the majority. To ignore the women workers would have been fatal in an industry which numbers them by tens of thousands. Accordingly the policy of the Unionists has been to bring men and women together into the same organization; to treat their labour as one and the same; and to provide equal rules for the remuneration and protection of all. The most notable result has been that women weavers in the cotton trade are paid precisely the same wages as the men; though indeed the fact is scarcely second in importance that the co-operation of the women workers in every branch of the cotton industry is absolutely secured for every trade movement.

The Northern Counties Weavers' Association numbers 71,180 members, and of these 43,000 are women and 28,180 men; whilst the Card and Blowing-room Operatives' Organization with its 35,000 members has 14,000 men and 21,000 women enrolled. There are no women in the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners, but by the federal arrangement I have referred to, on large questions of trade policy, and even of state policy, where the interests of the cotton trade are touched, men and women spinners, cardroom-workers, and weavers, every component part of the labour of the cotton trade, may be

counted upon to "go solid." Although the men are in a minority in these unions they have not as yet seen their way to giving any considerable share of the control to the women, and the managing bodies consist almost exclusively of men. The fact that women have made no move for representation would serve to show that their interests have been well guarded by the various executive bodies. Nor does there appear to be any jealousy or friction between the men and women in the Cotton Trade. Mr. Mullen, Secretary of the Cardroom-workers' Organization, giving evidence before the Labour Commission, spoke emphatically on this point, and what he said is equally true of other departments where men and women are employed together. It seems obvious indeed that where absolutely equal conditions are claimed, and can be maintained, for both sexes, the causes of ill-feeling and disagreement are removed, inasmuch as the fatal element of competition between men and women is no longer at work.

Contrast between Yorkshire and Lancashire.—At any rate we have not the extraordinary anomaly which the woollen trade shews, of work precisely similar in kind, and almost equal in quantity, being blacklisted, as it were, because it is done by women. I have before me a document entitled "Huddersfield Woollen Manufacturers' and Spinners' Association—Amended Weaving Scale," in which the piece-work prices for men and women respectively are given. The men have a table upon one side, and upon an opposite side it is indicated under the heading "Women. 15 per cent. to be deducted from men's scale for woollens and cotton warps reversibles. 20 per cent. to be deducted from men's scale for white-vested worsted mixture, or solid coloured worsteds and woollen shawls. 25 per cent. to be

deducted from men's scale for single white worsteds. 30 per cent. to be deducted from men's scale for serges and cotton warps. 15 per cent. to be deducted from men's scale for coloured worsteds." The above applies to looms running fifty picks per minute; for looms running seventy to eighty picks per minute 50 per cent. less than men's scale is to be paid for wages, while in other cases proportionate deductions are prescribed. For looms running 110 to 120 picks per minute the rate is briefly and compendiously set out as one-third of men's scale, which is equivalent to a penalty of two-thirds of the wage. The women, it may be noted, are as skilful and as rapid workers as the men, only less productive to the extent of about 2½ per cent., a difference which is accounted for by the inability of the women to readjust their looms when out of order. The disparity which is put upon them has therefore no proportionate foundation in fact. It is a purely artificial degradation of wages, a system at once of fining the workers for being women, and of putting women's work and claims for an adequate standard of living at a discount. To thoroughly appreciate what the Unions of the cotton trade have done it is well to bear in mind this manner of dealing with women's labour, which is habitual in every trade where men and women are jointly employed. Instances might be multiplied in the woollen trade. Thus in a large Halifax carpet mill the women's wages average 13*s.* 9*d.* per week, and the men's £1 1*s.* 8*d.* for the same work. And in the wool-combing trade of Bradford the average weekly earnings of the women are 12*s.* against the men's 18*s.*

Nor is it only in the matter of wages that the Trade Unions have been able to do so much for the women operatives

of Lancashire. There is abundant evidence to shew that public opinion has been brought to bear by them upon the administration of the Factory Acts, and that a standard of factory administration has been brought about through their agency that could not possibly have been attained without it. Then again in the matter of fines, with which I deal more fully later on, the Unions have made themselves felt. Whilst fining is still far too prevalent in the cotton factories it is less prevalent and arbitrary than in the woollen and worsted trades.

Supervision.—But perhaps the question which touches women most closely is the nature of the supervision to which they are subjected. Unhappily this has sometimes been of the lowest kind. Not only have bullying expedients been used for the purpose of "driving" the workpeople — for instance, by exposing the names of those who had fallen below the standard of the labour driver in the shed—but immoral conduct has had to be submitted to. However, the Unions have taken a firm attitude in this latter respect, and indeed two strikes have recently taken place, one at Oldham and one at Nelson, with the result that in each case the obnoxious overlooker was removed. In the Nelson case the evidence was submitted to arbitrators, clergymen of the neighbourhood, who, in giving their judgment, placed it on record that the offences of which the man had been judged guilty "are not uncommon among men who have the oversight of the female operatives in other mills, and as ministers of religion we most earnestly appeal to the employers of labour practically to recognise their duty in this matter, and seriously consider how essential it is to the happiness and well-being of those under their charge, as well as to their

credit, to make the moral conduct of their work-people the subject of nearer concern and of greater importance." It is satisfactory to note that this award has created an improvement in the behaviour of overlookers generally, and has attracted the attention of employers.

Fines.—The system of fines is deeply felt and bitterly resented. The fines may be divided generally into two classes; namely, disciplinary, and those inflicted on account of damage done to the work. Under the first head are included fines for late attendance in starting work, and in returning to the mill after meal hours; being found in the wrong shed or room; laughing, sitting down, etc. Fines for late attendance range as a rule from 1*d.* for the first five minutes lost up to 3*d.* and 6*d.* according to the time lost; other disciplinary fines from 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* The deductions made for damages of various kinds are even a more serious matter. After the work leaves the loom it is examined and passed, and if any flaw is found in it the weaver is liable to have the piece returned with the intimation that she must buy it, or submit to a heavy deduction. In many cases the fines imposed amount to the wages earned upon the piece. The injustices incident to such a system—if system it can be called where no rule obtains—are many. In the first place it gives an immense power into the hands of the overlooker or cloth looker who examines the work, and this power is often abused. Then again it enables the employers to shift from themselves to the workpeople the loss sustained by the use of bad material. The system of piece-work itself accomplishes this, as the worse the material the longer and more troublesome the job, and the less the wages. But in addition to this the worker's own time has to be lost in "mending," and wages are deducted for mistakes

which no amount of watchfulness or skill could avert. Frequently too the operatives are not even shewn the piece on account of which the fine is imposed. The "Particulars Clause," which was inserted in the Factory Act of 1891, had mainly its origin in what amounted to a fraudulent system of deductions. The system is somewhat too technical for explanation here, but it consists in giving weavers and other textile piece workers a false basis on which to calculate the amount of work done, so that the wages paid to them fall short of what they are entitled to receive. It is now compulsory upon employers to furnish to certain classes of operatives particulars of piece-work—another instance in which Trade Unionism has suggested legislation, for the clause is entirely due to the influence of the Textile Unions.

Among other forms of deduction are charges made for the use of hot water, the oiling of looms, the renewal and repair of brushes and oil cans, and the cleaning out of lavatories. I have known mills in which the system of fines has been purely nominal; but unfortunately these constitute a minority, the rule being that the workpeople have to ensure the employer out of their own wages against all risks and damage in the process of production, whether due to defects in material, machinery, or workmanship.

Sanitation.—Although the Factory Acts have been in operation for several years, the lamentable conditions to which reference has been made in passing can scarcely be said to have been seriously grappled with. It is necessary to distinguish between the conditions which attach to the work-place, and those which are due to the nature of the work itself. I have therefore considered them apart from one another. There is abundant evidence to shew

that throughout the textile trades operatives are exposed in a very grave degree to evils arising from defective sanitary arrangements. In the majority of mills the sanitary arrangements are most unsatisfactory, both from the point of view of health and decency. Evidence collected on this head by the Labour Commission leaves no doubt whatever upon the matter. Whether it is due to negligence, or ignorance, or both, the fact remains that, tried by the lowest standard, the sanitary arrangements are grossly defective. This part of the subject cannot be left without remarking upon the altogether lower level of public health administration existing inside the factory than that which is maintained outside. We must deal with remedies later on, but the lack of symmetry and co-ordination in our public health system stands out so glaringly in this particular as to call for some notice here. Dealing with ventilation, it is equally evident that the mills have been designed entirely without reference to the workers. The consequence is, that where ventilation exists it is often of the most haphazard description. Everything is subordinated to the purposes of manufacture, and however vigilant and efficient a factory inspector may be, it is often impossible to arrange in existing buildings for the proper renewal of air.

High Temperature in Cotton Mills.—With regard to temperature and atmosphere the woollen worker is better off than the cotton worker. The practice of sizing the cotton has led to the introduction of excessive heat and steam for the purpose of softening the fabric during the process of weaving. It was to check this that the Cotton Cloth Act was introduced; but, although a certain standard has now been laid down, the operatives are still exposed to very injurious influences.

In many of the weaving sheds the temperature stands at 90°, whilst steam jets are to be found within a few inches of the weavers' heads. Cotton weavers suffer in consequence from diseases of the chest brought about by the sudden change from the hot, humid atmosphere to the outside air. Rheumatism is also general, and cases of fainting are not uncommon among the workers in these mills. But even where there is no artificial production of a bad atmosphere, there always exists the natural deterioration induced by the presence of large numbers of workpeople penned together with a great mass of machinery. The great heat and exhaustion of air, the constant showers of fibrous dust given off by the fabric in course of construction, are elements which call for a strenuous counterblast in the shape of abundant fresh air. In the chapter upon diseases of occupation fuller reference is made to these matters.

Dangerous Machinery.—Much has been done to secure the protection of dangerous machinery, but accidents caused by flying shuttles are still far too frequent, and are sometimes attended by the most distressing results. In eighteen recent shuttle accidents the loss of an eye has ensued. This is a risk which is quite preventable by the adoption of a shuttle-guard. But the matter is left to the option of employers, and guards are not in general use.

Labour of Married Women.—There are other sacrifices demanded of the women who work in the textile trades besides those which can be directly connected with their work. I am aware that many of the workers themselves do not look upon their employment in this light. An abundant demand for labour in which women can participate is generally regarded as a great boon; but against the advantages must be set the drawbacks — the com-

parative break-up of home life and the habitual neglect of children. The problem is a grave one, and opinions are conflicting, but most people agree that something should be done at any rate to arrest the terrible infant mortality, which is to be found in all the centres which give widespread employment for married women. It is urged that it is impossible to legislate for comfortable homes, and that the direct prohibition of the labour of those whose homes should be their first charge is also impossible, but that yet some improvement is necessary, and can, by more moderate measures, be secured. We certainly cannot afford —the manufacturers themselves cannot afford—to have generation after generation sapped of its strength, and thrown upon life unfitted for its tasks. And much also may be said as to the doubtful economy of the mother's supplementary wage. It may sometimes be the means of adding to the family income, but cases have come under my notice in which the weekly payments made for looking after the home and children, the extra expenses involved in mending and in washing and in the preparation of food, outweigh the gain in wages. Then again the payments for doctors and medicine are higher in families where the mother works at the mill, and the children are left to themselves, than in those where the children are constantly under a mother's care. If in addition to this we remember the tendency of women's labour to pull down the general standard of remuneration, it is apparent that we must not hasten to accept the conclusion that the prohibition of the labour of married women, either partially or entirely, would mean the impoverishment of the family.

Child Labour.—Much attention has been given to the age of admission of children to work in the textile

trades. At the Berlin Conference twelve was fixed as a sort of international minimum at which children should be allowed to enter upon factory labour. The age fixed by the British factory legislation of that time was ten for half-timers and fourteen for full-timers, or thirteen if the child had passed the prescribed educational standard. Our representatives, however, with the concurrence of the Government, endorsed the proposal for raising the age to twelve. When however the Factory Act of 1891 was being passed through the House of Commons, the opposition of Lancashire and Yorkshire overcame the good intentions of the Government. Instead of proposing to raise the age to twelve, they refused to alter the then existing law, with the result that they were beaten on Mr. Sydney Buxton's amendment to raise the age to eleven. And most people—except of course directly interested parents and employers—who are acquainted with the unhealthy surroundings of mill life, are of opinion that eleven is too young an age at which to begin work, even as a half-timer. It is true that the certifying surgeon is empowered by the Factory Act to refuse a certificate to any child who appears to him to be from physical causes unfit for work; but the children are only submitted for examination once, either upon, or immediately after beginning work, so that their fitness for employment must therefore be more or less a matter of speculation. They are not again examined till they have become "young persons," and a certain number whose employers manage to evade the law are never examined at all.

Other Textile Trades.—The other branches of the textile trades, and the other districts in which those already referred to exist, are, with the exception of the linen trade, comparatively unimportant. Of those in the woollen-cloth

trade, or such of it as still survives in the West of England, we find women who work in the factories at Trowbridge and Stroud earning about two-thirds of the wages of the Yorkshire women. There is no effective combination either amongst the men or the women. Wages have been fixed by custom, and they scarcely ever fluctuate. The low-water mark of factory wages is to be found in the Essex crape industry, where the women are in receipt of about 5*s.* a week.

The silk trade is carried on mostly at Macclesfield and Leek. The wages earned by women vary according to the districts and employers. They are for the most part very low; and as employment in the silk trade is more intermittent than in any other textile industry, the average wages per week for the year are miserably low. In the silk-throwing trade of Macclesfield they amount to about 6*s.* a week if calculated throughout the year. Women working power looms can command about 12*s.* a week during the good season. Taking the various departments together, the average wages in Leek are 11*s.* 6*d.*, Derby 10*s.*, and Congleton 7*s.* In Coventry, which is the principal centre of ribbon weaving, much of the work is done by outdoor weavers; their looms are driven by an engine which supplies the power to each block of houses. The weaver owns the loom and pays rent for house and power together at the rate of about 10*s.* per week; home workers are able to command better prices than the factory workers.

In the carpet manufacture, of which Kidderminster is the centre, a large number of women are employed, the wages ranging from 6*s.* a week for the simplest work to 14*s.* 6*d.* for the more difficult. Men are employed in the heaviest work and in the most skilled departments, and they have been able to resist the introduction of women's labour

Fourteen years ago an attempt was made to introduce women at the same wages as those paid in Yorkshire, about 15*s.* a week, but the men held their ground, and still retain the old standard of 35*s.*

The hosiery and lace trades, which are carried on in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, give employment to several thousand women. There is no standard rate of wages in Nottingham; the small firms pay lower wages than the large ones, whilst in the adjoining country districts the rates are considerably lower than in Nottingham. A great deal of finishing work is given out by middlemen to people in these districts, and is paid for at a very low rate.

The lace trade is characterised by extreme irregularity of employment. Wages range from 4*s.* a week for "dressing" lace to 24*s.* for making it up. A quantity of work which was formerly done inside the factories is now given out, with the result that prices have dropped heavily. As in the hosiery trade, the sanitation and ventilation of the factories vary very greatly. No standard appears to be recognized or enforced, and as is the case in so many other industries, a few employers have spared no trouble or expense to ensure the health and comfort of their workpeople, whilst the majority have done little or nothing.

Belfast may claim to be the centre of the linen trade, which finds habitation as well throughout the north of Ireland, and in the little Scotch towns of Forfar, Brechin, and Dunfermline. But in Scotland the linen industry and the jute industry are largely carried on together, whilst in Belfast the linen trade almost unsupplemented holds the field, and provides work for nearly 30,000 girls and women. The processes of manufacture closely

resemble those of the cotton industry, but the wages are much lower, the unhealthy conditions far more marked, the protective agencies supplied by the workers themselves in the shape of trade unions altogether wanting, and a law similar to that which regulates the heat and humidity in the weaving sheds of Lancashire non-existent.*

It is extremely difficult to give the actual wages earned, for although the supply of employment is usually regular, much loss of time is occasioned by the exhausting and unhealthy nature of the work, and a considerable lessening of wages is consequent upon the deductions and penalties which are enforced. Thus if a woman loses half a day she is deprived of half her bonus, whilst the loss of a whole day means the disappearance of the bonus altogether. This so-called bonus on regular employment is really a part of the time wages of the workers. In most of the factories and mills it is 1*s.* 6*d.*, in some 1*s.* a week. As it is exceptional for a woman to be able to work the whole week through, this bonus rarely finds its way in its integrity into her pocket. In addition to this there are fines and deductions for damaged work, just as there are in the cotton and woollen industries. Taking all this into account, the average wages of the women can scarcely amount to more than 8*s.* or 9*s.* a week. Further reference is made to the grossly insanitary condition of the trade and the mills in another chapter. So far no labour movements on the part of the women have ever had the slightest success. The employers have been in the habit of meeting any movements of the kind by the threat of a lock-out, which has been carried into effect more than once.

* The linen trade has since been classed among "dangerous trades," and is now under "Special Rules."

CHAPTER V.

MISCELLANEOUS TRADES.

Machinery and Women's Labour—Demand for Cheap Labour—The Sweating System—Basis of Men's and Women's Wages—Women's Wages merely Supplementary—Women's Wages in various Industries—Difference between Men's and Women's Wages artificially kept up—Policy of Men's Unions.

Machinery and Women's Labour.—We have seen that in the textile trades men and women do the same kind of work, and are almost equally skilled. Where their labour is organised they can also in some districts command the same rate of payment; but it is certainly true that in most trades which have opened their doors to women, the idea on the employer's part has been to secure a supply of cheaper labour than could be obtained if men alone were to be relied upon, and to break down the male monopoly. While this may not form a conscious and distinct motive on the part of employers, it is obvious that the intense sub-division and specialisation of manufacturing processes has made it possible as time has gone on to dispense more and more with trained and skilled labour, and to call in women and children who, with a little practice, could soon adapt themselves to the work. The more labour has

become impersonal, the more the machine has produced both the muscular energy and the manual skill which were once purely human in their origin, the simpler has the labour question become from the manufacturer's point of view. "If," he says to himself, "my machine, on which I have laid out so much capital, and which represents the ingenuity and the experiments of long years of labour, can perform all the movements of the human body a thousand times more swiftly and surely; if my machine does the working and the thinking, it is not likely that I am going to pay the people who watch and tend it as though they did all the work." It is in those industrial departments where the human processes are most mechanical and lend themselves after a short training to almost automatic performance, that the field of women's labour under the factory system for the most part lies. All those who are at all conversant with the movements of industry and mechanical invention will be able to call to mind examples in point. Of course the same process is taking place where men only are employed. The skilled artizan has become less of a necessity as the skilled machine becomes more common; and, on the other hand, the unskilled labourer, the man who does the rough lifting, hewing, and carrying work is becoming more of a mechanic, as the mechanical stone-breaker, the steam navvy, the grain elevator, and other contrivances of the kind, come into use. Now, while we have these two sets of forces at work, one superseding the muscular energy, and the other the manual skill and the mental training, the bearing of these tendencies upon women's employment cannot be overlooked. It seems only reasonable to suppose that the demand for women's labour in connection with mechanical industry will become greater and greater as the

work becomes simpler and lighter; whilst masculine labour, in so far as it stands for special aptitude and skill, is likely to find itself in less request, and may have to submit to accepting a lower standard of remuneration fixed by women. The movement of labour in the United States, as well as in this country, tends to confirm this view.

The Sweating System.—Attention, perhaps, has been too much fixed upon certain incidents of the evolution of industry which, though important, are, as it were, branch lines, to have fully grasped the real economical trend of events. Amongst these is what is known as the sweating system. But the sweating system is, after all, but a kind of guerilla warfare carried on upon the flanks of the main engagement. You find it at its height in certain exceptional communities like London, where the cost of rent is so heavy as to make it more economical for the employer to let the worker pay the rent instead of himself. Again, the accumulation of human beings in a great centre like London is so vast that the purchaser of labour is in a position to compete with machinery without standing to lose. This is why the human pressure becomes so intolerable. It is a race in which the individual has to compete against organisation and machinery—usually under the most depressing conditions—in which the worker, without receiving any equivalent, carries a large responsibility, which, under organised industry, is discharged by the employer. It is only necessary to compare some great clothing factory where the sewing machines are driven by machinery, and work goes on in a well-lighted and airy building for a fixed number of hours daily at a fixed scale of payment, with the dirty and cramped rooms in Whitechapel or Stepney, which are rendered comfortless as a

home by being turned into a workshop, in which a ruinous price is paid for the sewing machine bought on the hire system, and where there are no regular hours of work, but alternations of high pressure and protracted idleness, and finally where the rate of payment is a matter for constant haggling between the unfortunate worker and the middleman who gives out the clothes from the City warehouse to be made up—you have only to compare these two methods of industry to realise the real nature of the struggle, and the intolerable pressure to which the victim of high rents, abnormal density of population, and correspondingly low standard of equipment is subjected.

The conclusions to be drawn from this brief survey seem to me to be not unimportant. In the first place, it is because labour has become so much lighter, and trades so much more easily learned, that the demand for women's labour has grown so immensely of late years; in the second place, machinery, the great leveller, is tending to abolish rapidly such differences as have existed between men's and women's labour; and, in the third place, that whether legislation or organisation be attempted in the interests of the workers, it must embrace men and women alike.

Basis of Men's and Women's Wages.—But another condition which faces one at every turn of the labour market, goes so far to differentiate the work of men and women, that it may seem to make all the levelling influences which we have just considered of no account. In the case of men wages are based upon the cost of living. They approximate to a man's standard of existence and that of his family for the time being.

With the woman worker, on the other hand, though there are exceptions, the rule is that her wages are of a supplementary character. If she can add something to the nett weekly takings of the family, that is the chief point. The daughter, who is apprenticed to the dressmaker or milliner, or who begins life as a half-timer in the mills, is not working for her living in the same way as the man who has to provide himself with an independence; and it is obvious that this factor, modified as it is by all the variations of the standard of family living in different parts of the country, must be at the bottom of much that is confusing, arbitrary, and inexplicable in the women's labour movement. For instance, cases are constantly to be found of a different scale of payment for men and women for the same work. Thus, in the French-polishing, printing, and many other trades, women are paid on a lower scale at piece-work than men. We find that the average value of a woman's work is 9*s.* or 10*s.* a week, while that of a man is two or three times as high. It is not that she does half or one-third as much work, or that it is to that extent inferior in quality to men's work: the reason, I think, must in very many cases be looked for from the domestic side. A woman considers what it will be worth while to add to the family revenue, rather than what her work is really worth. This fact more than anything else accounts for the immense difficulties of introducing order and humanity into the field of woman's labour; for, obviously, if the woman worker is to acquire any form of economic independence she must be able to earn such a rate of wages as will enable her to maintain a decent standard of subsistence. But this is rendered impossible so long as the effective

remuneration of women's work is decided by conditions other than those which properly attach to the work. With some girls working for pocket-money, others literally exploited by their parents, and regarded as a mere means of bringing grist to the mill; others again working to lay by something to get married on, and a further great section of wives toiling to add something to their husbands' wages; it is only too clear that the economic independence of women, which the advocates of *laisser faire* in women's labour hope to bring about, is very, very far from being accomplished.

These conditions make it extremely unsafe to attempt generalizations as to the wages earned by women in the various industries. There are, however, certain fairly well-defined groups of trades, having wage features in common, at which it will be interesting to glance. I will take first the trades—very few in number—where women are organized. Chief of these is the cotton industry; and here we find that where men and women do the same work they receive, with a few unimportant exceptions, the same wages. The payment for weavers, men or women, is fixed according to the length and character of the piece of material, and the looms are calculated to earn a certain sum for a full day's work according to their size and speed. The earnings, therefore, vary with the time worked; but it is quite a common thing for a woman weaver to earn 24*s.* a week all the year round. With spinners the case is different. The mule spinners are men, and earn about 35*s.* a week. The wages of ring and throstle spinners—women—rarely come to more than 14*s.* or 15*s.* This kind of spinning has, in some cases, displaced mule spinning, but only to a slight extent, as it is not available for all varieties of

material. The women and girls in the cardroom departments earn about 18*s.* and 20*s.*, warpers about the same, and winders rather less. These rates may be compared with those in the Yorkshire textile trade, where the workers' organization is less powerful, and consequently, in many cases, women are paid at a considerably lower rate than men for similar work. This is markedly the case with the Huddersfield weavers; also with the wool-combers at Bradford, where women earn 12*s.* for work at which men make 18*s.* The Yorkshire weavers' wages are in some cases as low as 8*s.* or 9*s.* a week, and seldom average more than 18*s.* A common plan is to calculate all wages on a "women's scale," and pay the men so much extra for the piece. The women in the Yorkshire textile trade, on the whole, do not appear to be in any better position than the ordinary class of unorganized female factory workers. In the West of England cloth districts wages are even lower than in Yorkshire; for a weaver earns only from 7*s.* to 14*s.* a week, taking the wages all the year round. For a great mass of other factory workers these figures would represent the usual earnings. Among this class are jam makers, bookbinders, mineral-water operatives, bottle-washers, and confectioners. Confectioners generally begin at 3*s.* 6*d.* a week, and the average is about 8*s.* But in some trades, or branches of trades, the earnings are still lower. The silk throwsters of Macclesfield, for instance, and the Essex crape weavers, make about 6*s.* a week, and the tobacco operatives 6*s.* or 7*s.* On the other hand, skilled cigar makers can earn from 18*s.* to 30*s.* a week. And again, some of the Birmingham trades are less badly paid. The button makers, for example, earn 10*s.* to 15*s.* a week, and in the hosiery, boot and shoe, and lace trades,

the wages for the more skilled parts of the work are fairly good, as women's wages go, in times of full work; though when the factories are working short time only 3*s.* or 4*s.* a week may be the average. These last trades, which have their chief seats in Leicester and Nottingham, all suffer from the competition of underpaid labour in the neighbouring districts. The hosiery seamer in the factory earns from 11*s.* to 16*s.* a week full time; but a home-worker at the same business may work hard all the week and only make 2*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.* Perhaps the worst paid group of trades is that in which home-work is the leading feature, such as shirtmaking, mantle-making, tailoring, matchbox-making. The earnings are not only low but uncertain, and it is impossible to make any generalization as to their amount. There are certain skilled occupations, such as dressmaking and millinery, in which a superior worker can earn what are, for women, good wages. A dressmaker will commonly make from 10*s.* to £1, and a milliner about the same; but it must be remembered that there are women and girls employed in the minor branches of such trades whose wages are much less, and in provincial towns the superior workers too are paid on a lower scale. Finally, there are the women employed in very toilsome, disagreeable, or dangerous trades, and these are by no means highly paid when the nature of their work is considered. Laundresses, in the washing branch of the trade, get 2*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* 9*d.* a day, and ironers 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.*, and in all branches of the laundry trade employment is intermittent. Women are employed in tinplate works, ironworks, and brickworks, for 7*s.* 6*d.* a week, or little more, and white-lead workers' wages are often only 2*s.* a day.

§ **Difference between Men's and Women's wages artificially kept up.**—To sum up, then, the points we have been considering;—whilst there are strong forces at work tending to abolish the distinctions between men's and women's work and the industrial disabilities to which women have been subject, such as lack of training and muscular strength, these very distinctions are still kept up by the different method of appraising the work performed. Even though a woman's work may be as good and as rapid as a man's, we have seen that her scale of payment is frequently far inferior to his. She may be working on the same kind of machine, speeded at the same pace, turning out the same commodity, and yet a heavy penalty is laid on her simply because she is a woman. The experience gained in the cotton trade, however, seems to shew that in an industry where machinery is largely employed, and where the trade organization includes both men and women, the economic disadvantages under which women labour tend to disappear.

It would seem, therefore, clearly to be in the true interest of workmen to promote such legislation and such methods of organization as will afford to women the same vantage-ground as men. A good deal of nonsense is talked and written about men's unions trampling on women's labour. It is not to women's labour as such that the unions are opposed; but they know from long experience that labour, whether it be men's or women's, that yields to the slightest pressure, and whose remuneration is subject to no given standard of living or efficiency, is the greatest danger that they could have to meet. To blame men for their action in trying to apply to women's labour the conditions which they have found absolutely essential to their own well-being,

is really to deny their own organizations any validity. It seems to me very certain that by resisting the levelling down which would follow any surrender of the standard of living as the minimum gauge of wages the men's unions have been fighting not only against the degradation of labour generally, but for a better status for women's labour.

CHAPTER VI.

INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATION ON HEALTH.

Economic Importance of Health—Causes of Ill-health—TEXTILE TRADES—COTTON: Steaming, Sizing, and Fluff—Children: Dr. Tarrop's Report—LINEN: Dr. Purdon's Report—Deaths of Belfast Mill-workers—Mortality among Women—SHODDY, SILK, and LACE—OTHER TRADES—POTTERY MANUFACTURE—WHITE LEAD: Examples of Injurious Effects—Effect on Offspring.—Greater Susceptibility of Women—White Lead in other Manufactures—LUCIFER MATCH TRADE—VENTILATION IN FACTORIES.

§ **Economic Importance of Health.**—The economics of industry from the point of view of wealth have quite a literature of their own; but the more vital standpoint of health has been almost entirely overlooked by the economist, the sociologist, and the physiologist. It is a singular oversight, for one would have thought that the conservation of industrial energy was a tolerably important element in the field of production. But, along with certain other large assumptions, we seem to have reckoned upon an inexhaustible supply of labour. It may be considered somewhat fanciful to assume anything else when in most trades the supply of labour exceeds the demand, and machinery increasingly takes the place of physical labour. The number of the labourers who present them-

selves is not, however, the only matter for consideration, the quality of their labour is of the most material importance. It is a matter of the greatest moment to secure well-developed and healthy people for the industrial army.

§ **Causes of Ill-health.**—The main causes of industrial ill-health, which apply equally to men and women, though with even greater intensity to the latter, may be classified under two heads;—causes which are incidental to the nature of the work itself, and injurious circumstances connected with its surroundings. Under the first head would come cases of poisoning from handling or breathing or absorbing in some way the poisonous matter given off from material that was being worked up; the inhalation of "dust"—a generic term which may suffice to express an almost infinite variety of particles of a more or less injurious character generated in working up textile fabrics and in the various processes of manufacturing and finishing metallic commodities; and, thirdly, the contact with noxious gases and vapours which are encountered in not a few industries. Under the second head would come all matters connected with the surroundings of the mill or workshop, such as the extent to which fresh air is admitted and foul air driven out, the cleanliness of the workrooms, the extent to which gas is burned, the heat that has to be faced, whether from exposure to furnaces, to the hot, moist atmosphere produced by hot water apparatus, or by machinery, or from over-crowding. We should have to range more or less under both heads such incidents of occupation as sedentariness, or strain and pressure, as these may be partly inherent in the occupation, and partly the result of

custom, and therefore not necessarily connected with the processes of the work to be performed.

But in considering women's work we have to take into account not only the immediate effect upon the worker, but the indirect consequences that may follow from injury to the system; and here we are brought almost at once into contact with all the grave questions connected with the subject of married women's labour. As to the extent and gravity of the injuries to health arising from the general causes indicated, there is no question whatever. The reader who wishes to ascertain for himself full particulars as to diseases of occupation cannot do better than read the work by Dr. Arlidge, in which he breaks the ground on this immense subject. He will find no less than ninety occupations specified as dangerous because of the amount of dust disseminated, and an equally large category of trades in which the women employed suffer in one way or another from contact with harmful materials, from emanations, or from muscular or nervous troubles contracted in connection with their work.

§ **Textile Trades. Cotton.**—If we glance at some of the processes connected with the textile trades, we shall be able to form some idea of what their effects are upon the operatives. The manufacturer in Burnley or Blackburn who steams his cotton in the weaving of it produces a given result not only upon the fabric but upon the operative, and the same statement applies to the process of sizing, of which steaming is a subsidiary function. Both processes are entered into for the purpose of weighting the cotton-cloth, which is sold by the pound. The compound known as size is made up of chloride and sulphate of zinc in conjunction with tallow and china clay, and this size dust gets powdered

over the operatives and finds its way into their lungs. The temperature often exceeds 90° F. in the weaving sheds, and the moist heat generated by the jets of steam is excessively trying. In many weaving sheds the damp accumulates on the floor and induces rheumatism and other troubles, and the clothes of the women employed become saturated. So the adulteration of cotton cloth carries with it the adulteration of human health and the break-up of constitutions, and results in consumption, bronchitis, rheumatism, and general depression of vital force. Again, in other branches of the textile trades quantities of fluff and fine fibrous dust are generated, and the workers must take their chance of its getting into their lungs. This is especially true of the jute manufacturing and rope making industries. It is not necessary here to enter very closely into the technicalities of manufacturing; everyone will understand that the preliminary processes of textile work, the "combing" and "carding," as it is called, are bound to set free quantities of dust, whilst, later on, the heat and damp which prevail in much of the spinning and weaving are the main health factors to be considered. For those who live out of sight of this great industry, never hearing the rattle of the clogs over the roads in the early morning, at the dinner hour, and again when the bell rings for ceasing work; who only know from passing them in the train the look of the huge and brilliantly lighted mills, it may require some effort of imagination to realise the importance of these matters to the operatives, who for 56½ hours every week are to a greater or lesser extent working under trying conditions.

§ **Children.**—We must not forget too that for half a week many thousands of young children are working in

these places exposed to precisely the same conditions; and besides the half-timers who gravitate between the mill and the school many children of very tender years spend the time when their whole future depends upon healthy conditions from six o'clock in the morning till five o'clock at night in the mills. If the work is trying for adults, what must it be for the half-timers and young whole-timers? On this point Dr. Tarrop, one of the certifying surgeons, has made some valuable researches, and I give below his diagnosis of two thousand factory children examined by him.

§ **Dr. Tarrop's Report.**—"Of the first two thousand cases noted 1771 may be described as specimens of the ordinary factory child, and I separate them into three classes—341 superior, 1106 medium, and 324 distinctly below average. [Lancashire average, *nota bene.*] As to the rest of the 2000, 151 were really fine children, of whom twenty-one were excellent examples of humanity, weighing 130 lbs., 126 lbs., and 120 lbs. respectively. The balance of the 2000—78 in number—were a feeble folk, amongst whom were some eight veritable pigmies, ten to thirteen years old, and not scaling fifty pound a piece. It must be borne in mind that the medium average of Lancashire factory children is not equal to the average elsewhere. The latter standard is hardly reached by the 341 children described as superior, while the medium division is greatly below the standard of good health. This is much more distinctly marked amongst children of thirteen, 'full-timers,' who have passed some years in the factory, than it is in those of ten years of age. Of sixty healthy children, averaging thirteen and a half years, and taken as they came (thirty-one girls and twenty-nine boys), the average weight was seventy-four pound, or eighteen pound below the average of good health elsewhere. The lower division of 324 included many defective and diseased cases, and of course the seventy-eight residuum were poor indeed. The cases of defective or diseased children numbered 198." He appends to these numerical particulars the observation that "Factory work is not so excessively laborious, it is the heat, impurity, and dust-laden state of the atmosphere that injures health. The promising child of ten degenerates into the lean and sallow person of thirteen, and this progress is

continued until a whole population becomes stunted, and thus the conditions of life in factory towns become a real source of danger to England's future. In addition to the loss of physique it is instructive to note the deterioration in personal appearance. Out of the 2000 children under notice only sixteen could be described as handsome, and of these the larger portion were girls from Ireland."

§ **Linen. Dr. Purdon's Report.**—The conditions in the linen trade, the head-quarters of which are at Belfast, are similar in kind to those in the cotton trade. Careful inquiries were made nearly twenty years ago by the late Dr. Purdon, certifying surgeon of Belfast, who has devoted many years of his life to this investigation. He states that—

"The skilled operatives amount to 25,759, and out of this number only five arrive at 70 years, and only one, a weaver, has been working 55 years (hand and power-loom). . . . Another class, to which I would draw special attention, is the *carders*, whose life averages 45·7, and the average length of time employed as such is only 16·8 years. I may mention that if a girl gets a card at 18 years, her life is generally terminated at 30 years. . . . The next class that suffers greatly from the pouce is the *preparers*, and the average time that they work is 28·7 years, and the longest time that any have been employed in the department is 48 years. I may say that when the workers that are employed in the unhealthy departments begin to feel that they are suffering from affections brought on by their employment, they at once select (if they can) the healthier processes, but the chest disease has already made too much progress, and their lives are only prolonged for a short time. The departments generally selected are the weaving, winding, and reeling. The *dressing* department is . . . of special importance. The room . . . requires to be kept at a very high temperature, varying from 90 to 120 or 125 according to the character of the fabric. On account of the great heat, no one under 18 and not free from chest affections is engaged, and as it is considered that their days are shortened by several years they are paid very high wages. It is seen from the tables that the average time of employment is only 16·6 years, and only one has worked for 30 years; they suffer greatly from the unhealthiness of their employment. I would recommend in addition to my former re-

commendations that the temperature of the mills should be especially attended to, and that at three o'clock each day steam fans should be set on (if the temperature has increased much), as the system that has been working for so many hours in an atmosphere of so high a temperature is still further exhausted by an increase of heat as well as by prolonged labour in the same; and also that males should be employed at the cards.

"AGE OF 'OLDEST WORKERS' IN FORTY-TWO MILLS AND EIGHT COUNTRY MILLS.

AVERAGES. DR. PURDON'S TABLES.

	Town.		Country.
Roughers	46.4	...	46·1
Sorters	52·7	...	56·4
Carders	44·9	...	46·5
Preparers	48·4	...	57·4
Spinners	44·8	...	49.1
Winders	45.3	...	65.7
Weavers	46·2	...	50
Warpers	40·2	...	36·7
Dressers	45·8	...	51
Reelers	52·6	...	55·5
	46·73		

TEMPERATURE.

JUNE 21st.	MONDAY. 8 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.	TUESDAY. 8 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.	WEDNESDAY. 8 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.
Weaving Shed.	72...	82...	87	74...	79...	86	75...	82...	86
Dressing Shop.	98...	106...	106	98...	104...	107	97...	111...	106

	THURSDAY. 8 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.	FRIDAY. 8 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.	SATURDAY. 8 a.m.
Weaving Shed.	74...	82...	84	72...	85...	85	77
Dressing Shop.	95...	103...	105	101...	108...	111	98

	MONDAY. 9 a.m.	3 p.m.	TUESDAY. 9 a.m.	3 p.m.	WEDNESDAY. 9 a.m.	3 p.m.
Outside Linen Hall.	60...	65	56...	68	58½...	65
Inside Linen Hall	59...	65	58...	63	60 ...	63½

	THURSDAY. 9 a.m.	3 p.m.	FRIDAY. 9 a.m.	3 p.m.	SATURDAY. 9 a.m.
Outside Linen Hall.	60 ...	64	60...	44½	62
Inside Linen Hall	59½...	61½	58...	62½	61½

"THE MORTALITY OF FLAX, MILL, AND FACTORY WORKERS.

"It will be perceived that the flax manufacturing operatives suffer far more from phthisis and diseases of the respiratory organs than the other two classes—*i.e.* the rest of the artisan and labouring population, and the gentry and mercantile classes—nearly three-fifths of those that die annually being taken off by diseases of the respiratory organs, while in the other two classes the average amounts to about two-fifths. The death-rate among those employed in the preparing rooms is exceedingly high, being thirty-one per thousand; few of those employed in these rooms live beyond sixty years. The reason that the machine boys appear to suffer so little is that when they become 'poucey'—*i.e.* asthmatic—from flax dust, numbers of them leave the mills on account of suffering from chest affections, and go to other trades, where they linger out a diseased existence, or die from phthisis, and their deaths have been placed in the second class.

"In the machine and preparing rooms the atmosphere is constantly loaded with the flax dust called 'pouce.' . . . The irritating quality of the dust is felt upon the throat, which soon becomes dry. This irritation gradually creeps into the lungs and produces chronic inflammation of the lining membrane, which soon manifests its presence by the worker being attacked each morning with a paroxysm of dyspnœa and coughing. The dyspnœa is sometimes so great that he takes hold of the table of the machine in order to enable him to get over the attack more easily. This state is so well known that when a worker is seen suffering so he is said to be 'poucey.' Those employed in the roughing, sorting, hackling, and preparing of flax suffer from this affection, and in the great majority of cases die from phthisis, &c. . . . The spinners are frequently attacked with vertigo and fainting, and many accidents have occurred by their falling on the machinery. They also suffer from varicose veins and œdema of the ankles." After describing the "mill fever" consequent on first employment, Dr. Purdon adds: "A peculiar eruption also attacks the uncovered parts of the body. This I call lichen. I have never seen an adult affected with it. The cause is said to be the effect of the flax water on the young person's skin." He recommends that no half-timers be employed in the unhealthy processes, and that those who are so employed should be at least fifteen years of age, healthy, and well developed; a thorough system of ventilation should be carried out in these rooms; the wearing of the Baker respirator made compulsory; a quarterly inspec-

tion of the mill by the certifying surgeon, who should see the effect the work has on the constitution of those engaged, and, if suffering from incipient disease, they should be obliged to cease working; also there should be an examination on every fresh engagement. "In order to lessen as much as possible the number of deaths that occur among children, each mother ought not to be allowed to resume work for at least two months after the birth of her child, and then should be obliged, when going to work each day, to bring her child to a public *crèche*, paying for its support a certain sum per week. She at present pays an old woman who farms them. The *crèche* ought to be visited weekly by the certifying surgeon, who is to inspect each child, and if he finds any to be suffering from want of maternal nourishment, or from disease, he is then to send a printed notice to the employer of the mother, stating that she is required to take care of her sick child. She is not to be allowed to return to her work until the child ceases to require her attention. The *crèche* to be under Government inspection."

§ **Deaths of Belfast Mill Workers.**—Matters are substantially the same to-day in Belfast as they were when Dr. Purdon wrote. The factories were under the Act then as they are now, and, with the exception of raising the age of half-timers and fixing the limit of a month after confinement as the period during which a mother may not be legally employed—amendments which apply to every branch of textile and non-textile industries—no changes of any importance have been made. I am enabled to give here the mortality returns extracted from the Belfast register of the deaths of mill-workers during the year 1891, and they will show in the most convincing manner the effect of this occupation upon health.

Age.	Causes of Death.				Other Causes.	
	Phthisis.		Respiratory Diseases.			
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
10	..	..	..	..	..	..
11	..	..	..	..	..	1
12	..	1	..	..	..	..
13	..	..	..	..	..	..
14	..	5	..	1	..	1
15	1	7	..	..	2	1
16	3	14	2	1	1	5
17	1	13	..	..	1	6
18	3	17	..	3	..	4
19	..	17	..	..	1	6
20	2	11	..	1	..	7
21	2	14	..	1	1	5
22	..	9	..	1	..	8
23	1	5	..	..	..	2
24	2	12	1	1	..	4
25	2	6	1	1	..	..
26	..	7	..	2	1	2
27	1	9	..	..	..	3
28	..	5	..	2	..	1
29	..	10	..	2	..	2
30	1	5	..	4	..	6
31	..	6	..	2	..	3
32	..	4	..	..	3	3
33	..	3	..	1	1	2
34	..	4	..	3	..	3
35	..	6	..	..	..	2
36	..	..	1	1	..	1
37	3	5	..	2	1	3
38	..	2	2	1	..	2
39	1	1	2	1	2	..
40	1	4	1	1	..	5
41	2	..	1	1	..	1
42	..	2	..	4	..	1
43	..	1	1	2	..	1
44	..	1	1	1	1	3
45	2	..	..	2	1	4
46	..	1	2	2	1	..
47	1	1	2	..	1	2
48	1	..	4	..	1	1
49	1	..	1	2	..	1
50	1	..	1	5	1	3
51	..	..	1	1	..	..
52	..	..	..	..	..	1
53	..	..	2	1	1	..
54	..	..	..	1	..	1
55	..	1	..	..	..	1
56	..	..	1	2	1	2
57	..	..	1	1	..	2
58	..	..	3	2	1	..
59	..	1	..	1	1	..
60 and upwards	..	..	11	11	18	20
Total ..	32	210	42	71	42	132

Mortality among Women.—It will be seen that of 413 women who died in the course of the year, no fewer than 210, or more than one-half, died of phthisis, and 125 of these were under the age of 25. Again, there were 71 women who died from respiratory diseases, so that we get a grand total of 281 deaths amongst the women from pulmonary disorders. How closely this terrible state of things is connected with the nature of the occupation may be judged from the following extract from the report of the Medical Officer of Health for Belfast for the year 1892. Commenting on the fact that of the 6,537 deaths registered during 1891, 1,017 were attributable to phthisis, and 1784 to disease of the respiratory organs, Dr. Whitaker remarks:

"As is well known, a large proportion of our working class population is employed in mills and factories, and I would point out that the nature of their employment must cause any of them having a predisposition to chest affections to be ready sufferers therefrom. Breathing, as they must do, a close, heated atmosphere, laden with particles of flax-dust, fibrous and other matters irritating to the lungs; going from thence directly, it may be, into the cold, damp, or frosty air, poorly and lightly clad; often too young—especially the female workers—to bear the exposure to which they are subjected, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the mortality from these diseases is as great as it is. There is little doubt but that any arrangement by which these changes of temperature could be made less frequent or less trying would be attended with considerable benefit to the health of the workers. Unhealthy occupations principally affect the respiratory organs. The dust of the flax in the manufacture of our staple industry is a serious cause of bronchitis and phthisis, and should lead, if possible, to greater supervision in the ventilation or filtration of the air in our large spinning mills."

The sickness in the linen and cotton trade is attributable to various causes. There is the dust which rises from the material; the heat and watery vapour; the dust from the

Cornish clay which is used in the weaving departments for sizing; the long standing; and the stooping position which has to be maintained in some departments. And if we add to these the strain on the attention throughout all the hours of monotonous work, the great noise, and the bad air poisoned with overcrowding and poor ventilation, we shall agree with Dr. Arlidge that we have cause enough here for disease. Accidents abound in these great mills, where the machines in rapid motion are placed so closely together that the workers are constantly in danger from loose gearing, and flying shuttles from the looms in motion often cause the loss of an eye and sometimes even of life.

Shoddy, Silk, and Lace.—The manufacture of shoddy is attended by the production of an amount of dust that is injurious to the operatives' health, and the effluvium given off from the rags is another excessively trying feature of this trade. Those who are engaged in it almost invariably have to pass through the ordeal of what is known as "shoddy fever," a disagreeable though not dangerous illness, the symptoms of which usually last for at least a week, and disappear as the worker grows accustomed to the presence of the dust. Silk weaving is on the whole the healthiest of the textile trades, though here we find a process, which is resorted to also in some departments of the cotton trade and largely in lace-making, which is most prejudicial to health; it is known as "gassing." This process consists in passing the threads very rapidly through gas jets, the object being to burn away any slight irregularities. Medical evidence shews strongly the evils which befall the operatives who have to spend their time in an atmosphere highly charged with the products of gas combustion, full of fluff and exceedingly hot. The operatives

in the lace trade, which is carried on mostly at Nottingham, suffer in an especial degree from "gassing." There is not sufficient space at my disposal to go into the numerous family of trades in which the worker is liable to suffer from dust given off; but amongst them are carpet-making, hair-dressing, the flock trade, and those departments of the upholstery trade in which fluffy material is used. Unfortunately the drawback noticed by Dr. Arlidge of the lack of precise medical evidence in the cotton trade exists also in these industries.

The Potteries.—So far we have been considering dust of vegetable origin; but this forms only one group, although it is with this group especially that women are concerned. In the pottery trade, however, the workers are exposed to mineral dust, and in this trade women are very largely engaged. Experts differ somewhat in their view of the relative injury caused by organic and inorganic dusts, though it seems to be agreed that where the material is chiefly of a gelatinous character the harm done is comparatively trivial. But we need not examine closely into these matters, for the statistics of death and disease furnished by the Pottery District are conclusive as to the injuries inflicted. To a lesser degree women are employed in the subsidiary branches of the Sheffield trades, but in this case it is the men who bear the full brunt of the injury. Men and women work in the pottery trade, and the dust given off is of such a fine character that it finds its way into every corner of the factory. Thus women who may not be immediately employed in the finishing processes which are attended to by men, may still receive their share of the fine white penetrating powder. But in certain parts of the work, and those the

most dangerous, women only are employed. Such are the china-scourers and the towers. It is the towers' business to put a smooth surface on the dry ware, which is set in rapid rotation whilst sand paper or some other medium of the kind is applied. The result is that in the course of the day the workers get powdered all over with the dust that is given off, besides inhaling a considerable quantity. Where no fans are at work to draw off this dust the consequences are terribly destructive, and the tower, unless she happens to be a person of exceptionally fine constitution, succumbs in the course of a few years, sometimes of a few months, to the accumulation of fine particles in the pulmonary passages. Even where a fan is at work the presence of the white powder may be detected on the person of the worker, and as the dust is constantly blown by her from the ware, some portion of it is inevitably inhaled by the act of inspiration. Dr. Greenhow, who was sent by Sir John Simon, the medical officer of health for the Privy Council in 1861, to report on the potters' diseases, wrote as follows about the china scourers, and the conditions to-day are precisely the same as they were then:

"China scourers remove loose flint powder from the baked china, and in doing so, partly by brushing, partly by rubbing with sand paper, they send much flint dust into the atmosphere about them—a dust which is lighter and floats more obstinately in the air in proportion as the earthenware is fine. This dust inhaled into the lungs of the work-people is a terrible irritant to the bronchial surface which it invades. The women (for the occupation is a female one) soon get habitual shortness of breath, with cough and expectoration; very often they have bleeding from the lungs, sometimes also from the nose, and their chronic disease is from time to time accelerated by more acute catarrhal attacks to which they are particularly subject. Comparatively few china scourers continue long at the employment; those who continue at it become sooner or later asthmatical, those who relinquish it in

time are said occasionally to regain perfect health, but for the greater number the mischief is reported to be irretrievable. Against the danger of this occupation scarcely any provision has been made. A scourer who had worked eight years, and was suffering from chronic bronchitis, said that four other scourers who were employed in the same room had died from the effect of the occupation since she had commenced it, and that a fifth was then at the point of death. In a third pottery, a woman who had worked ten years at the occupation asserted that about twelve other scourers in the same shop had died since she entered it. Out of thirteen china scourers belonging to six or seven different potteries, whose evidence was taken, only four were in good health; nine were suffering in consequence of their occupation."

The evils caused by the dust are aggravated by the very close and stuffy atmosphere in which much of the work is carried on.

White Lead.—We come now to consider some of the effects caused by working poisonous materials. Foremost among these come the trades into which lead enters. By some strange and perverse fate the manufacture of this deadly commodity is, so far as this country is concerned, undertaken largely by women. This is due in a great part to the fact that their labour can be procured more cheaply than that of men, and that the operations in which they are engaged require but little skill or training. In the white lead works of Newcastle, Sheffield, and East London the women are employed in carrying heavy weights on their heads, climbing ladders while loaded in the same way, and in fact in performing those operations which are usually done by means of trucks and hoists and other mechanical appliances. Anyone who has watched the white-lead women passing backwards and forwards in their long, weary trampings under their heavy loads, clambering up and down the ladders, or passing the lead from hand to hand up a staging beside the stoves where it has to be

heated, must realise how thoroughly retrograde in its tendency, as well as mischievous in its physical and moral effects, is the existence of a class of cheap and unresisting labour which the manufacturer can bend into any shape, or turn to any purpose that he chooses. The most ardent advocates of perfect freedom for women in matters industrial will scarcely defend the system of transport, and transport of a highly poisonous material, which depends upon the cheap supply of women's heads, or the system of elevators which is kept up in the same fashion.

But the physically exacting and degrading conditions of the work, though unmatched in this and probably any other European country, are as nothing compared with the action of the lead poison upon the health of the women. No woman working in the dangerous processes of a white lead mill can escape attack, for the subtle poison permeates the system, resulting in the slighter cases in faintness, sickness, and weakness; in the graver instances in lead colic, epilepsy, paralysis, blindness, madness, or death. After all the precautions that have been adopted so far under the Factory Act, it has been demonstrated too clearly that the lead poison retains the upper hand and finds its way into the system in the form of dust, which is either swallowed, absorbed through the pores of the skin, or works in under the finger and toe nails in defiance of baths and nail brushes and the swallowing of sulphuric acid drinks. In spite of the establishment of a sort of hygienic police, which is maintained in the best works with a view to enforcing regularity in the matter of baths, lead poisoning remains to-day a common feature in white lead works. During five years 145 cases have been treated in the Newcastle Infirmary, in addition to many others at the

Newcastle Union and Gateshead Union, and whilst in Poplar Workhouse 30 cases were treated in 1882, there were 28 cases in 1892. From Newcastle comes the report that the greatest human wrecks which pass under the notice of the medical charities are workers from the lead mills, and when we examine the following biographies of lead workers we shall hardly marvel at Dr. Oliver's emphatic view as to the pernicious character of this trade for women.

Injurious Effects of White Lead.—Barbara R——, a married women, aged thirty-three years, was admitted to the infirmary on December 4th, 1890, and died the following day from lead poisoning. She had never worked in the lead more than a few days at a time. Eliza H——, aged twenty-five, after five months working in the "stacks" was seized with colic and was ill for seven weeks. On recovery she worked for two years in the stoves, and then had another attack of colic. On getting better she was seized with a fit on her way to work at six o'clock in the morning, and was unconscious for fifteen minutes. Her comrades then helped her into the factory, where she worked all day, feeling very shaky. During the two months that followed she was better, but at the end of that time was seized with convulsions while at work. She became unconscious, and was taken to the workhouse hospital, where she had a succession of fits, followed by total blindness, and death was narrowly escaped.

Effect on Offspring.—Although the law prescribes eighteen years as the minimum age at which women may follow this occupation, two cases have occurred recently in which girls have died from lead poisoning who were under the age. Nor does the suffering cease with the men and women who work in the lead mills; they bequeath

an awful legacy of sickness to their children—an amount of suffering which is almost disproportionate to their own. I came not long ago in contact with a woman who had worked for the fifteen years of her married life on the "pans" in a lead mill, a process which is considered to be non-dangerous; during her employment she had suffered little, yet this woman had never borne a living child. I give another dismal chronicle in support of my remarks.* "C. E., twenty-seven years of age. There was first a living child, then one miscarriage. She left the lead works and went into the country, where a second child was born. She then returned to the lead works and had two miscarriages. M. W., aged thirty-nine, a lead worker for eighteen years, has had twelve children, of whom four are now living. The remaining eight died at ages varying from five days to four, six, and fourteen months, in convulsions. She has had in addition five miscarriages, three in succession. In the case of Mary A——, aged forty years, whose mother too had been a lead worker, we have a history of eight children, all of whom died in convulsions." In one form or another paralysis too is common among the workers. It is sometimes acute and sometimes chronic, and its commonest manifestation is in "wrist-drop,"—loss of power in the wrist. The victim of "wrist-drop" is incapacitated from lifting or moving anything or in any way using the hands, and this crippled condition sometimes lasts for life.

Greater Susceptibility of Women.—The greatest authorities on the subject of lead-poisoning, notably Dr. Oliver, lay stress on the greater liability to lead-poisoning which women show over men. Not only do we find that

* See DR. OLIVER, *Lead Poisoning*.

women are more susceptible, but they are susceptible earlier in life. Girls from 18 to 23 years of age are at the most susceptible age, while with men the dangers of lead-poisoning are greatest between 41 and 48. The fashion in which men and women suffer differs also, for we note that, while young women suffer very readily from "saturnian poison"—fall quickly victims to colic, and recover to be again and more severely attacked—men may work for long terms of years, suffering slightly and seldom, till they fall victims, at the end of long service, to paralysis. It must be borne in mind, however, that those women who have been the subject of Dr. Oliver's investigation have been brought more directly and constantly into contact with the peculiarly dangerous processes of lead manufacture than the men.

White Lead in other Manufactures.—But the actual manufacture of white lead is only one and the first of the stages in this commodity's devastating course. We may trace its steps in the potteries, where men and women in large numbers fall victims to the lead which is used in the glazes; in the black country, where we find it applied to the tin-sheet enamelling trade, which is now covering the railway stations and other places with advertisements; and in the colour trade and many other industries, to say nothing of that of painters and decorators. Nearly 100 cases of lead-poisoning were treated in the Wolverhampton Infirmary in 1892, the majority of which consisted of young girls who were employed in the sheet-iron enamelling trade, and there have been several cases of deaths in this industry of recent years.

Lucifer Match Trade.—Necrosis of the jaw is a disease of a peculiarly horrible character, to be found in

the match-making trade. It is due to the use of phosphorus, and first attacks the jaw-bone, working its way through the teeth and gums. Owing, however, to the adoption of greater precautions and the substitution of other materials for "white" phosphorus necrosis now counts fewer victims than formerly.

Ventilation.—But great as are the evils of trade diseases, these are not general, and exist only in particular trades; whereas when we turn to the question of factory ventilation and heating, and the worker's general environment, we find that in all directions health is being undermined, and in nearly every occupation there is something wrong. One of the worst evils of factory and workshop arrangements is the absence of proper ventilation, and the consequent lack of a supply of pure air. We may be met by the reply that the opposition of the *employés* is to a large extent responsible for the discomforts under which they work, and that it is impossible to ventilate rooms properly while the workpeople fill the ventilators with rags as soon as the manager's back is turned. Such stories as these belong to the same class of anecdotes as those which detail the objection of the worker to wearing some species of gag for keeping out dust, or to the incessant repetition of the act of washing the hands or brushing the hair for the removal of injurious particles, and they do not really affect the general question. The fact is, that we are all creatures of habit more or less, and if we are accustomed to working under certain conditions the majority of us would be something more than human if ready to preserve a high hygienic standard in face of constant daily exposure to prejudicial surroundings. The sensible policy, therefore, is surely not to neglect practicable

remedies because of cases of individual carelessness, but to recognise at once that the only effectual course is to make the conditions on which the worker is so largely dependent as healthy as possible. Besides, after all points of view have been considered, there is a good deal to be said for workers' objections. Clumsy attempts at ventilation are largely responsible for the dislike to fresh air which is to be found in many workshops; just as ill-made respirators, which only succeed in checking free breathing without excluding the dust or whatever it may be that is to be kept out, may have induced a certain recklessness of precautions on the part of the operatives in certain trades. But however that may be, until we come to recognise that the hygienic condition of the factory and workshop is a matter for the scientist and the community in precisely the same way that the hygienic condition of the town is, it will be hopeless to expect the maintenance or even the recognition of any industrial standard of health. Employers are as much creatures of circumstances as their workpeople, and it would be fatuous to the last degree to hope for very much from the "moralisation of workshop environment." If there is to be any effective safeguard it must be found in the regulations prescribed by the community as a whole, to which the enfeebling and crippling of its workers represents a very real danger.

CHAPTER VII.

INFANT MORTALITY.

The Registrar-General's Returns—Town *versus* Country—Selected Districts—Age-periods and Mortality—Causes of Death—Preston, Leicester, Blackburn—Relation of Married Women's Labour to Infant Mortality—Dr. Tatham's Evidence—Dr. Farr's Tables—Recent Statistics—Deterioration of Survivors.

The Registrar-General's Returns.—It is obvious that the influence of occupation upon the health of married women cannot be adequately considered without some inquiry as to its effects upon the life and health of their children. As is the case with so many other vitally important branches of industrial life, there is but scanty information of a statistical kind here to guide us, though there is enough local information, taken in conjunction with the general statistics which are published from time to time by the Registrar-General, to establish a close relation between the employment of married women and a high infantile rate of mortality. In his annual report, the Registrar-General goes into the subject in some detail. He begins by pointing out that the year 1891 showed that the proportion of deaths of infants under one year to a thousand registered births was 149 per thousand, a proportion which was equalled in 1886, and slightly exceeded in 1890, but was otherwise higher than in any year of

the preceding decennium. He remarks upon the wide differences to be found between the rates in the various counties, and the persistence of these differences from year to year; "the general rule being that the rate is lowest in the purely agricultural, and highest in the mining counties and those of the textile industries. It is in the towns of these latter counties that the infantile mortality assumes the highest proportion; the three towns which are invariably, or almost invariably, the worst in this respect being Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn."

This is highly significant, and but for the fact that statistics have been successful in isolating several towns associated with certain industries in which married women are very largely employed, it might have been urged that the high rate of mortality in the towns was simply due to density of population, lack of fresh air, space, and sunlight. But the Registrar-General, by the tables which he has compiled in his last report, enables us to judge as to the effect upon child life, first, of country air and conditions; secondly, of the average urban conditions; and thirdly, of urban conditions plus the employment of women in factory labour. Seeing that Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn had the highest infantile death-rates of all the towns included in the weekly returns from 1881 to 1891, he has selected them for what we will call Group III. Then he has taken five mining or industrial counties, namely, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Lancashire, West Riding, and Durham; and three agricultural counties, namely, Hertfordshire, Wiltshire, and Dorsetshire. With the help of the death registers of the various counties and towns for the years 1889, 1890, and 1891, tables have been prepared showing the

causes of death and the exact ages of infants under a year old who had died, out of one hundred thousand born in each of the various districts.

Age.	Of 100,000 born, the numbers surviving at each age.			Annual Death Rates per 1000 living in each successive interval of age.		
	Three Rural Counties.	Five Mining and Manuf'g. Counties.	Three Selected Towns.	Three Rural Counties.	Five Mining & Manuf'g. Counties.	Three Selected Towns.
At Birth	100,000	100,000	100,000	213	331	382
3 mths.	94,820	92,051	90,874	75	154	240
6 ,,	93,068	88,574	85,574	61	128	180
12 ,,	90,283	83,081	78,197	—	—	—

Age-periods and Mortality.—The table shews at a glance that there are more than double as many deaths in the selected towns as in the rural counties—22,000 as against 10,000, whilst the manufacturing counties stand at 17,000. It must, however, be observed that this last group contains the textile districts and various other typically unhealthy trade areas, so that it is scarcely a fair criterion. An examination of more detailed statistics which have been reduced to a tabular shape shew, as the Registrar-General points out, that in the rural counties and the three selected towns the mortality is at its maximum in the first week, falls heavily in the second week, remains at much the same level during the third week, and then shews a fresh very considerable decline in the fourth. To summarise his conclusions as to the points of likeness between counties and towns: "Both shew an excessively high mortality in the earliest days of life, which becomes less and less as days, weeks, and months pass by, until the seventh or eighth month has elapsed, when the decline either is

arrested or becomes very much smaller. In both the mortality is so high in the first three days, or even in the entire first week, that, were it maintained without diminution, every infant would die without nearly completing one year of its existence." But now coming to the points of difference. We have seen in the first place that the town rate is more than twice as high as the country. But the town rate is not merely higher for the whole period, but higher for each fraction of the year. Moreover, the town rates are most in excess of the country ones, not in the earliest weeks or months of infancy, but in the later months. "In the first week of life, the town rate exceeds the rural rate by 23 per cent., in the second week by 64 per cent., in the third week by 83 per cent., and in the fourth week by 97 per cent. The same result comes out when the rates for successive months in the counties and towns are examined. In the first month the town mortality is 27 per cent. above the rural rate, in the second month 121 above it, and the excess then goes on increasing until in the sixth month it amounts to no less than 273 per cent. This is the month in which the difference is greatest, though it remains throughout the rest of the year at a not very much lower point." This progressive increase is a most significant fact, and it is much to be wished that instead of concluding his examination at the limit of one year of age, the Registrar had continued it, say up to five years, so that he might have been able to form some notion of the further loss of life which falls upon the children in the districts where their mothers are employed in the mills and factories. There is not space here to reproduce the two tables in which the Registrar-General enumerates the causes of death in the rural and town districts, together

with the ages at which death takes place. But these tables are of such extreme importance that it may be well to compare some of the more general causes of death.

Causes.	Rural Districts.	Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn.
Premature Birth	1381	2279
Diarrhœal Diseases	481	3961
Convulsions and Diseases of the Nervous System	1381	3776
Diseases of Respiratory Organs . . .	2105	3701
Atrophy	1738	2734

The following table shews the period of death in the two districts respectively:—

Age.	Rural Districts.	Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn.
	Deaths.	Deaths.
1 Month . .	3488	4947
2 Months . .	985	2130
3 ,, . .	707	2049
4 ,, . .	673	1967
5 ,, . .	618	1749
6 ,, . .	461	1584
7 ,, . .	483	1475
8 ,, . .	483	1226
9 ,, . .	454	1317
10 ,, . .	476	1220
11 ,, . .	455	1110
12 ,, . .	434	1029

Relation of Married Women's labour to Infant Mortality. Dr. Tatham's Evidence.—The most striking difference between the rural districts and the selected towns is in the case of diarrhœa, which, taken with enteritis, shews a mortality seven times as great in towns as in the country. These figures tell their own tale, but it may be well to add the testimony of Dr. Tatham, for many years the medical officer for Manchester and Salford, as given before the Labour Commission. "In the year 1881 my attention was first seriously directed to the employment of young mothers in factories, in the course of my investigations concerning the causes of our abnormally heavy infant mortality, Salford being one of the great English towns in which infant mortality was year after year notoriously excessive. As a result of anxious inquiry, extending over many years, I was, and still am, convinced that very much of that excessive mortality was due to infant neglect, consequent on the withdrawal of maternal care within a few weeks of the birth of the children. In consequence of this practice the infants were frequently consigned to the care of some ignorant neighbour, or were nursed at home by an older child of the family. The children were artificially and often improperly fed, and a heavy death-roll was the ultimate result."

Questioned by the Chairman as to the time, in his opinion, a mother should remain at home after the birth of the child, Dr. Tatham said, "I should not be consistent if I said less than six months."

"That of course in your opinion would have a very important influence upon the rate of mortality?" "I think it would."

"And upon the nurture of the children?" "I think so."

"Is it within your experience that a considerable number

of young married women work in factories?" "A very large number."

"You speak of the effect upon infant mortality; could you say anything of the effect upon the mothers themselves?" "I have no doubt that the health of the mothers will be damaged. It must be so, I am sure; that part of the subject has not engaged my attention so much as this terrible question of infant mortality."

It may also be interesting to add the one question which was asked by the representative of the manufacturing interest, Mr. Tunstill, a cotton spinner—"Have you considered the financial question that is involved in this recommendation of yours?" And the answer, "I have purposely avoided that; I leave that to those much better able to judge of it than I am."

Dr. Farr's Tables.—It is most unfortunate that there should be such a lack of medical and statistical evidence as to the effect of factory labour upon the health of mothers. For this, I suppose, we shall have to wait for the gradual development of the human element in statistical science, though local medical evidence can be produced to shew the mischief that is constantly caused to the mother's health. This question of infant mortality is at any rate beyond the region of the speculative, and all schools of thought, however divided they may be by the great controversy between freedom and the regulation of women's labour, must be agreed that it would be nothing short of a national disgrace to allow matters to drift on year after year as they have been doing for many years past. It is now twenty years since Dr. Farr, the great health statistician, shewed the waste of life that was going on in the textile centres. He took the towns of Oldham, Nottingham, Man-

chester, Salford, Leeds, Norwich, Portsmouth, and London, found the number of women of twenty years and upwards who were engaged in the textile manufactures and household duties in each, and then worked out the particulars of infant mortality from 1873 to 1875. The result, which is to be found in a table in his work on *Vital Statistics*, is extremely striking. Thus, in Oldham, where 11,178 women were set down as engaged in textile manufacture, out of a total of 32,343 women of twenty years of age and upwards, the infant death rate per thousand births stood at 180; in Nottingham, where upwards of half the women were similarly employed, at 200; in Manchester and Salford, where a quarter of the women were engaged in textile manufacture, at 188; in Portsmouth, where there is no textile work, 146; and in London, where there is also none, 159.

Recent Statistics.—But in 1891 the infantile death rate in the worst textile towns exceeded any of the figures produced by Dr. Farr. Thus in Preston the mortality was 220. There is a slight improvement, but only slight, in the other towns investigated by Dr. Farr. Thus in Oldham the rate is 171 instead of 180, in Manchester 178 instead of 188. None of the figures that have been published, however, give anything like an adequate account of the real state of affairs. What we want is a statement confined to the children of those employed in any given industry where married women's labour is prevalent. To take an entire town like Manchester or Salford is only to approximate to the facts. In both these towns there are healthy suburbs and large numbers of well-to-do people whose children are taken away every year to the seaside, and there are many industries which are healthy, and where no women's labour is employed.

But anyone who cares to take the trouble to examine the Registrar's report, and to work out the death rates of the poorer quarters of Manchester and Salford, Bradford, Burnley, and Blackburn, or to take the Potteries and make similar calculations for Hanley, Burslem, and Stoke will be appalled by the contrast between the figures of those places and the rural death rate. He will find that, instead of being twice as high, the rate of infant mortality is even four or five times as high as in the country districts. Such figures as we have however, are sufficient, as I have said, to shew the close connection between the employment of mothers in mills and the death of children.

Deterioration of Survivors.—As to the deterioration of the survivors there can be no question. The evidence of Dr. Tarrop, quoted before, and of other certifying surgeons is conclusive on this point. That school of thought which frames its industrial policy on the theory of the survival of the fittest, can scarcely point to any very triumphant results in the districts which we have been considering. They may assert, and will no doubt continue to assert, that the wholesale sweeping-off of damaged lives in the early months is a great boon to the race, and that the survivors, having stood the ordeal, are presumably more or less seasoned for the discharge of their functions. It must be pointed out, however, that the tests applied are one and all unnatural ones, and that if the laws of nature are to be consulted we shall be right in assuming that the children who have died are those who were best fitted to live. For what are we to think of the standard of living which subjects all new-comers to their capacity of assimilating adulterated

and unhealthy food, dispensing with maternal care, breathing air which is foul, and existing without sunshine? Yet this is the kind of test which the pseudo-scientists of the day are so proud of applying, and the result is a weedy, sickly, unnatural generation, brought up without regard to any one of the most fundamental laws of nature. It would be every bit as reasonable to evolve a system of botany which rejected, as extinct or dying, families of plants, which could not be cultivated in a dark chamber or in a refrigerator, as to create conditions of industrial life without reference to the laws of nature or the teachings of health, and then to argue that the fitness of the race depends upon compliance with them.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEGISLATION.

FACTORY LEGISLATION INCOMPLETE: Its intention—Sanitary and General Provisions — Causes of Inefficiency — Factory Acts a Compromise — Experts Required — Cubic Space Requirements — REFORMS NEEDED: HEALTH—Medical Examinations—Hygienic Regulations — Employment of Mothers — Need for Statistics — HOURS OF LABOUR: Abolition of Legal Overtime—Prevalence of Overtime — Overtime Unnecessary — Taking Work Home — REGULATION OF OUTWORK—CHILD LABOUR—EXTENSION OF THE FACTORY ACT DESIRABLE—Laundresses—Nailmakers—Local and Imperial Authority—THE TRUCK ACT—Conclusion.

Factory Legislation Incomplete.—There is an idea abroad, which is quite unwarranted, that our body of factory legislation is more or less final in its character, and that it has, in fact, accomplished the purpose for which it was intended by its authors. The provisions of the Factory Acts range themselves for the most part under three heads. They deal either with educational matters, with the regulation of the hours of labour, or with sanitary conditions. It needs no argument to show that great progress in public opinion has been taking place in respect of these three points. The Public Health Act is sufficient evidence of the progressing standard of health in surroundings and conditions; the Education Act is certainly not of a final kind, and on no question

has public feeling developed more rapidly of recent years than on that of the adaptation of the hours of labour to human capacity and health. If, on the one hand, the standard by which we are to test the effectiveness of such legislative provisions as come under these heads is much higher than it was a few years back; on the other hand, it must be remembered that industrial conditions are not a hard and fixed quantity, that they vary with the progress of invention, the incidence of competition, the creation or alteration of tariff frontiers, and many other causes. The knowledge of chemical methods alone has introduced revolutionary changes into many industries, so that regulations which were drawn up ten years ago to meet a given state of things may be out of place or inoperative now. The Factory Acts, for instance, were designed in large part to protect women and children from the exhausting effects of prolonged toil, the idea at the root of the measures being the same great principle which underlies our whole system of public health. But when the agitation for the ten hours' day culminated in the Factory Act the question, after all, was not settled. It was within the bounds of possibility that such mechanical contrivances could be devised as to make the period of legalised toil quite as harmful to the operatives, or, indeed, more so, than the longer day. The question whether intense toil concentrated into a relatively short period, is more or less trying to the human frame than if the same toil were dispersed over a relatively longer period, cannot be settled off-hand. But the fact undoubtedly remains, as I have shewn in the chapter on textile industries, that machinery has been speeded up to a point which is immensely in excess of that which prevailed when the

hours were longer. At the present time, therefore, the strain upon the attention and the wear and tear of the nervous system are greatly in excess of former times, and the worker must be "on the stretch" the whole time to attend properly to the work. The illustration will serve to show how the factors governing the industrial situation shift from time to time, and act and react on one another, and that if factory legislation and administration are to be really effective they must keep pace with the times and adapt themselves to changing conditions.

The fact that so large a number of additions and modifications have been made in our factory legislation since 1802, when the first intervention of the State on behalf of factory children took place, shews that some attempt at least has been made to grapple with this part of the question. It may suffice for our immediate purpose to note the clear intention and spirit of British factory legislation; viz., the protection of those who are unable to help themselves in the matter of securing humane conditions of labour. Thus, the State does not allow children to work all their time in a factory until they are thirteen years of age, and not then unless they have attained to a standard of school proficiency, which is fixed by the Secretary of State; nor does it allow half-timers to begin work until they are eleven. Then again, no child or young person of either sex under sixteen years of age is allowed to enter a factory without obtaining a certificate from the certifying surgeon as to his or her fitness for the work. If a fatal accident happens in a workshop, or a serious or fatal accident in a factory, the certifying surgeon has to give in his report on the case. Then again, night-work is absolutely forbidden for women and children. But the State contem-

plates much more than this. It provides that workmen as well as women and children shall secure conditions such as are not prejudicial to their health and well-being. There are clauses in the Factory Acts—permissive, it is true, for the most part—bearing upon the efficient ventilation of factories and workshops, and providing for the installation of fans in certain cases; for the purifying of the atmosphere where noxious, poisonous, or offensive matter or injurious dusts are given off in the process of work; and for a certain allowance of space and air. Anyone who goes through the Acts carefully can have no doubt that the protection originally accorded to women and children has now in certain important respects been recognised by the State as a claim to be enforced on behalf of every class of workmen. Nor must we forget, in estimating the functions of the State in relation to labour, that the Factory Acts form one of an entire class of legislation which is based on the principle that human life and health are the direct care of the organised community, and can under no circumstances become, whether by hire or sale or any other form of contract, the property of the employing class. Thus the Mines Regulation Act forbids the employment of women underground, and fixes the age of twelve as that in which boys may go below ground; whilst it formulates a complete and most elaborate code of precautionary measures in the interests of the workmen. The Employers' Liability Act belongs to the same category, for it throws upon the employer in a large number of cases the responsibility for injury done to his workpeople in the course of their employment.* It is clear

* The Bill recently rejected by the House of Lords contained a clause enabling workpeople to claim compensation from employers who had omitted to take reasonable precautions for securing healthy conditions, in the event of such neglect injuring their health.

then that the State is committed to a principle the maintenance of which involves responsibilities of the profoundest importance, and for the carrying out of which in their entirety not only vigilance and a highly organised staff of trained inspectors are necessary, but close and scientific acquaintance with various forms of industry, and with the physiological effects of these various forms upon life and health—in a word, administrative experience of an extremely high order. And this brings us to an inquiry as to the administrative efficiency as well as the legislative symmetry of these great industrial measures.

Reasons for Inefficiency.—But notwithstanding such admirable intentions on the part of the State many abuses still thrive amongst women workers, excessive hours are frequently worked, and hundreds and thousands of women break down every year or become prematurely old from overwork, or from the very unhealthy conditions which the Factory Acts are designed to put an end to. In spite of certifying surgeons and the code of public health enjoined by the Acts the children who enter our factories turn out totally unfitted for the strain, and grow up into half-developed beings or fall victims to some form of industrial disease. To some the criticism may suggest itself that these things cannot be cured by Act of Parliament or by encroaching on the liberty of the individual. However, as modern States have agreed that the protection of human life is one of the first reasons of their existence, and as common-sense, to say nothing of humanity, does not see much to regret in the limitation of the liberty of one class to inflict grave hardships upon another, such an objection will not take us much further. Moreover, there is a sufficient explanation of the compara-

tive breakdown of good intentions without laying the blame upon Acts of Parliament. The gap between intention and performance, which is presumably to be found in most of our institutions as well as in individuals, is in truth not lacking in our protective labour regulations, and the vaguer the intention the greater the gap. And it would not be fair to lay the blame for the failure in giving substance to the Acts altogether upon those who administer them.

Factory Acts a Compromise.—The Factory Acts are of the nature of a compromise between two different social schools. The vague phraseology, the lack of a definite standard, the readiness to grant exceptions to certain trades, and, under certain conditions, the large discretion left in the hands both of the Secretary of State and the Inspectors of Factories, these are amongst the signs of the contending elements among which the Acts represent a compromise. Where, as in the case of the textile trades, a definite working day is laid down and overtime is absolutely prohibited, the administration of the Acts is a comparatively simple matter. The factory inspector and the factory clock between them are a match for the employer who is disposed to let his machinery run beyond the legal limit. On the other hand, where the emphatic "shall" which applies to the textile trades is changed into "may," where overtime is permitted on account of a press of orders, or of season requirements, or the perishable nature of certain commodities, the standard of administration must inevitably become relaxed like the Acts themselves. Several instances, somewhat too technical perhaps to be given here, might be produced in which the Acts have been so drafted as to place the staff of inspectors in an almost impossible position. Thus they are supposed in a general

way to see that factories and workshops are properly ventilated, and that conditions of health are favourable. When overtime is worked each person is supposed to have an allowance of 400 cubic feet of space, and the inspector is expected to be the judge of what is healthy or injurious in various processes of manufacture. These surely are cases in which a feeble and uninformed intention, rather than defective executive measures, must be held responsible for lack of results. It is obviously unreasonable to throw the responsibility upon an inspector of introducing a variety of highly-technical hygienic appliances into buildings which have been designed and erected without regard to health, and in which plant and machinery have been laid down with a single eye to production—just as unreasonable in fact as to try to preserve a town from typhoid fever by taking precautions after a defective drainage system has been completed instead of before.

Experts Required.—Again, a staff of experts is necessary for carrying out the public health side of such an Act as this, and yet the Home Secretary, with no experts to consult, is expected to preside as a minister of industrial health over the welfare of the vast mass of the working population, whilst duties are thrown upon the inspectors which could only be efficiently discharged with the help of expert sanitarians, engineers, architects, chemists, and medical men. The requirement of 400 cubic feet of space is an instance of the official brain working in a vacuum, and here again the administrative side is not to be blamed. How is a factory inspector to see that every person who works overtime gets his 400 feet? How can he calculate? Is he to set his calculation against that of the manufacturer who is anxious to keep all his hands

working extra hours, and who assures him that, after making due deduction for bench room, machinery, and the like, each person will enjoy his allotted share? Assuming that it is a physical possibility for the inspector with his measuring apparatus to get round to every place of work where overtime is carried on, to keep a record of all the alterations made in the workshops and the number of persons occupied and so forth, is it to be supposed that the inspector will carry out what is presumably the intention of the law, namely, that each person shall have 400 feet of air to breathe—a very different thing from 400 feet of space, inasmuch as furnaces and gases breathe air just as much as human beings, whilst nearly every trade sets up conditions which tend to pollute or deteriorate it to some extent? Let us bear in mind that the life and health of multitudes of people hang upon the distinction between a clear and definite regulation which is framed to be carried out and a vague and misty one which may represent a principle and an intention, but cannot be reduced to practice in its clouded shape, and we shall understand the vital importance of a clear, straightforward, and definite regulation.

Reforms Needed.—Our answer then to the question, "How is it that, in spite of Factory Acts, things are still so bad to-day for many of the most defenceless workers?" is, that the State has not troubled to understand where the shoe pinches, and that in its eagerness to concede something to supposed trading interests it has allowed confusion and licence to interfere with the working of those humane enactments. I therefore propose to examine briefly the various points which call urgently for immediate reform.

(1) *In respect of Health.* (*a*) *Periodical medical examination* in trades where women and children are largely

employed. The Certifying Surgeon—who by the way ought to be employed directly by the State and not by the manufacturers—at present only examines the children and young persons before they begin work in the factory, and has no jurisdiction over workshops except upon the special order of the Secretary of State. His duties should be extended to workshops, and periodical examination should be made of the women, children, and young persons—especially of the two latter classes—where ground exists for supposing that the conditions of any trade are injurious to health. A body of experience should be brought together as to the special effects of given industries upon health with a view to such improvements and modifications being made in mechanical and other manufacturing processes as to minimise injurious effects.

(*b*) *Definite Hygienic Regulations.* Each industry in which injurious processes are carried on should be subjected to periodical investigation by experts, working in conjunction with the Certifying Surgeons and factory inspectors, whose duty it should be to recommend such improvements as are feasible with a view to the protection of health. Steps have already been taken under Section 8 of the Factory Act, 1891, for drawing up special rules for injurious trades, but in view of the constant changes which take place in manufacture, it seems highly desirable that there should be a regular staff of experts in connection with the Home Office, so that the Factory Department could be in touch with such industrial changes and inventions as take place from time to time. Another very necessary step seems to lie in the direction of some system of licensing buildings erected for industrial purposes, so that a proper survey by sanitary and architectural experts may be made, and any

necessary structural alterations carried out before the work is begun. Just as the Education Department now lays down definite hygienic regulations to be observed in the construction of schools, so the Factory Department, in connection perhaps with the local authorities, should seek to enforce a standard of healthiness.

(2) *The Employment of Mothers.* As the law stands at present, the only regulation with regard to the employment of mothers is one which forbids their employment in factories and workshops within a month after the birth of a child. This was one of the recommendations made by the Berlin Conference. In the opinion of Dr. Tatham, for many years the medical officer of health for Manchester, and now head of the Statistical Department in the office of the Registrar-General, as well as of many other medical men who have studied this question for years on the spot, this period is far too short in regard both to the health of the mother and the welfare of the child—two points which it is practically impossible to separate in considering this question.

Whilst it may be urged on the one hand that any further intervention on the part of the State must proceed with the utmost caution in view of the extent to which married women are employed, it is impossible to regard with anything but feelings of alarm and even of consternation such statistics on this matter as are already available, and it would seem in the highest degree desirable that either a Select Committee of the House of Commons, or a Departmental Committee representing the Home Office and the Local Government Board, should without delay extend and consolidate the researches which have been made, with a view to furnishing in the most reliable manner data upon

which any further enactments may be laid down. That there will have to be a further and considerable extension of the period referred to, and that in certain occupations which are shewn to be peculiarly prejudicial to the health of women the prohibition of their labour may be held to be necessary in the public interest, are facts which no one acquainted with the growth of public sentiment can fail to observe.

(3) *Regulation of Hours of Labour.* (*a*) *The Abolition of Legalised Overtime.* Allusion has already been made to the grievous defect which has gradually crept into and tended largely to destroy the efficiency of the Factory Acts. Evidence given before the Labour Commission, and furnished on many occasions in the annual report of the Chief Inspector of Factories by Her Majesty's factory inspectors, proves conclusively that in the first place such overtime is injurious; in the second place, that it is often totally unnecessary; and, in the third place, that it is impossible to keep an effective check on the period during which work is performed. The character of that section of the Act which enables overtime to be worked may be judged from the following extract: "Where it is proved to the satisfaction of a Secretary of State that in any class of non-textile factories or workshops or parts thereof, it is necessary by reason of the material which is the subject of the manufacturing process or handicraft therein being liable to be spoiled by the weather, or by reason of press of work arising at certain recurring seasons of the year, or by reason of the liability of the business to a sudden press of orders arising from unforeseen events, to employ young persons and women in manner authorised by this exception, and that such employment will not injure the health of the

young persons and women affected thereby, he may, by order made under part of this Act, extend this exception to such factories or workshops, or parts thereof." Employers are thus permitted to work women and young persons—and a child of thirteen bearing her school certificate ranks as a "young person"—for forty-eight days in any twelve months for fourteen hours a day exclusive of meal times, in flax scutch mills, brick and tile making, parts of rope works carried on in the open air, Turkey-red dyeing and glue making (overtime being permissible in these cases because of considerations of weather), letterpress printing, bookbinding, lithographic printing, Christmas present making, firewood cutting, almanac making, ærated water making, and playing-card making (these trades being licensed because "press of work arises at certain recurring seasons of the year"), the making-up of any article of wearing apparel and furniture hangings, artificial flower making, fancy box making, biscuit making and job dyeing, and the extensive class of workers who are employed in warehouses in polishing, cleaning, wrapping, or packing up goods. The State itself also asks to be exempted from its own laws, and we find that, by an order gazetted September 16, 1889, the milling, perforating, and gumming of postage and inland revenue stamps are made the subject of legalised overtime. But the forty-eight days which are set as the limit in these cases are doubled in respect to that category of trades which deals with perishable articles, so that in processes connected with preserving fruit or fish and the making of condensed milk, women are actually allowed by the law to work for ninety-six days in the course of any twelve months for fourteen hours a day.

The only objections that can be urged to putting

factories in general upon the same footing as those in the textile trades are the arguments which were adduced against the principle of State regulation of the hours of labour. If the textile trades can be conducted without overtime — trades which are dominated by changes of fashion and season just as much as any other trades— is it not absurd on the face of it to allow printers, pork-pie makers, and a host of other manufacturers whose business is supposed to be affected by liability to sudden pressure of orders and by season demands to remain untouched by the Act? Granted that excessively long hours are necessary for certain periods in the case of operations that have to be conducted out of doors, or such operations as fish curing and the like, the way to meet the difficulty is not by over-taxing the strength of those employed, but by working double or, if necessary, treble shifts. It cannot be too strongly urged that these exceptions are entirely contrary to the spirit of factory legislation, which is based upon the doctrine that trade must adapt itself to what is necessary for the workers in regard to their health and requirements as human beings, and that it is entirely opposed to the theory that human beings must adapt their standard of health and leisure to the conveniences and exigencies of trade. Whether the maximum hours of labour fixed for the textile trades, *viz.*, fifty-six per week, are not too many is another question. In the opinion of the operatives themselves forty-eight hours are long enough, and the textile trades are promoting a bill to give legislative force to their belief. It has been shewn in previous chapters that the intensity of work has greatly increased, and that the demands made upon the strength and endurance of the workers are

probably more severe than was the case before the passing of the Acts. It must not be forgotten that a law which has been made by the national legislature in such a matter as this imposes a responsibility of the very gravest kind upon the nation. In other trades the hours of labour are now, generally speaking, shorter than those in the textile trades. London builders, taking the year round, do not work more than an average of forty-eight hours a week, engineers work fifty-two and a half, and so do boiler-makers and iron-founders. This is not the place for a detailed treatment of the demand for a shorter day, but the fact cannot be overlooked—a fact which was insisted upon in the fifth chapter—that as motive power and machinery replace manual work so the claim for longer periods of rest and leisure grows stronger. There is a danger lest society in its intense pre-occupation with the multiplication of commodities should take up a false position simply by forgetting this fact. But if the arguments in favour of a general reduction of the hours of labour are strong anywhere, they are peculiarly strong in the case of women, for in a vast number of cases a woman, when she leaves her daily work, has to begin a second spell of work at home.

(*b.*) *Continuation of Work at Home after Factory Hours.*—This is a practice which is openly encouraged by some manufacturers, and more or less secretly by others. It is a common sight, for instance, in Belfast, to see women returning home from the handkerchief or other works in which they have been employed during the whole day, with bundles of work to make up at night, so that the worker has to stitch often till midnight, or later, in order to take the finished bundle back the next morning. In London, too, this practice obtains. Obviously, if such

an infringement of the spirit of the Act is allowed, the factory regulation becomes worthless in respect of hours.

(4) *The Regulation of Out-work.*—By a clause in the Act of 1891 the Home Secretary was empowered to schedule certain trades in which work was given out by a middleman or manufacturer—either to contractors or to workpeople direct—to be done off the premises; to enforce the keeping of a register giving the names and addresses of such persons, so as to enable the factory inspector or the sanitary authority to investigate the conditions under which the work was being done. The Home Secretary has made an order which brings the clothing trades, the cabinet trade, and the electro-plating industry under this provision, and energetic steps have been taken to trace the work thus given out. Obviously, however, such a task involves a large staff of inspectors; and in cases where the duty devolves upon the sanitary authority the expense suddenly thrown upon the ratepayers to provide an adequate staff, added to other considerations, has led to practically nothing being done, so that the order remains inoperative. It is unquestionably desirable that the person who gives out the work should be made responsible for the sanitary and other conditions under which it is performed, a provision which would act as a deterrent to a practice which is admittedly full of hardships for the workers and of risks for the consumers. As to the latter consideration, the whole question of the administration of the workshops part of the Factory Acts by the local authorities will have to be revised. As things are at present, there is no power of compelling them to do the work, whilst the division of authority which exists between the Factory Department and the local sanitary

authority is very far from tending to the efficient carrying out of the measures laid down. The great thing is, however, that the principle of throwing the responsibility for the conditions of labour upon the person who practically employs such labour—whether by means of the sweating system or not—should be recognised, and a first step in this direction has undoubtedly been taken by the registration order referred to.

(5) *Child Labour.*—Both the educational and physiological experts who have given attention to this question are agreed that two things should be done. The system of half-time, under which a child spends half the week in the factory and half in the school, is a double evil to the half-timer, as both education and health suffer from the process. In the opinion of many competent observers the system of half-time should be abolished. So long, however, as it is permitted to continue, the age of eleven which was fixed under the new Act is undoubtedly too low, taking the general level of European nations as a standard, for, after all, the work in school is to the average child as hard as work in the factory, and it is too much to demand of young children the double strain entailed by mental, nervous, and physical causes which is involved in the school and factory *régime.* The age of thirteen, at which the child passes into the "young person" stage—to use the legal expression—and obtains the privilege of working full time, may be warranted in certain trades, but it is highly desirable that the field of occupation should be differentiated, and that occupations such as the textile trades, which involve special strain upon the physique of growing children, should be regulated by a scale of age.

(6) *Extension of the Factory Acts.*—The Acts should be

extended so as to cover the case of laundresses, who ought never to have been left out. The sanitary conditions under which vast numbers of these women work are extremely bad, the hours of work are excessively long and far above the standard set by the Factory Acts, and in steam laundries there is a quantity of machinery used without any safeguards being adopted for proper fencing, so that accidents are very frequent. The arguments used for keeping laundries outside the Acts are, that it is a more or less domestic industry, that any limitation would fall very severely on the small employer, and that the nature of the trade is such as to necessitate long working hours during the latter part of the week, when most of the work is done. Against this, however, we must set the facts that no attempt has really been made to organize the work, which could as well be spread over a longer period as crowded into a few days each week; that individual employers have successfully done so; that for the protection of the women as well as of the public, sanitary supervision is most essential; and, finally, that the health and safety of those employed are severely compromised by the conditions under which work is done at present.

(7) *Co-ordination of Local and Imperial Authority.*—Reference has been made to the difficulties which arise in the dual control exercised by the Factory Department and the local sanitary authority, which latter body is responsible for the sanitary conditions of workshops, subject to a final reference to the Factory Department. Experience in past years has proved that when it has been sought in the same way to devolve upon the local authorities these important powers, general neglect has been shown by a large number of districts, so much so indeed, that after a trial it was found necessary for the Factory Department

to resume the work of inspection. This portion of the Act has in fact been tossed backwards and forwards with results that can scarcely be called satisfactory. It remains to be seen whether some plan cannot be adopted by which the local authorities can be utilised without the provisions of the Act being allowed to lapse—a plan which should be checked by head-quarters either at the Local Government Board or the Home Office, or by an executive Labour Department of the future, so that a given standard of efficiency may be secured. There remain certain administrative reforms which will no doubt be carried out as time goes on. Already large additions have been made to the existing staff of factory inspectors.*

Whilst much of the work is of a more or less routine and simple character, and can be discharged best by those who are acquainted with the technicalities and methods of the trade, there are certain departments which call for the highest scientific skill, for full statistical information, as well as for unceasing vigilance. A word or two must be added as to the penalties which are inflicted under the Acts. The scale suggested by the Acts is very low, and the magistrates often inflict a merely nominal penalty, so that employers who infringe the Acts have little to fear except from the annoyance caused by proceedings being taken against them. This is a thoroughly unsatisfactory state of things.

(8) *The Truck Act.*—For the protection of women workers an amendment to the Truck Act is sorely needed; the system of arbitrary fines and deductions, to which reference has already been made, is an unmitigated evil,

* The appointment of Departmental Committees, consisting of scientific specialists and factory inspectors, shews that the Home Office is alive to the necessity of improving the quality of factory inspection in the case of injurious trades.

and tends more than any other condition of labour to degrade the workers, and hold them in bondage.

Conclusion.—During the next few years we are likely to see great changes, for the agitation which has taken place in the labour world in recent times is not of a spasmodic kind. It is the outcome of years of struggle and suffering and thought, and of many defeats on the part of the workers. For them the Factory Acts are of quite incalculable importance. They stand for industrial health, for the safeguard of the worker's leisure and standard of life, for the civic principle in the affairs of the labour market and the workshop. They stand, too, for the ratification by the State of the will of the people as expressed by their common voice and common organisations. It is not true to say that they spare them the trouble of doing something which they might equally well do for themselves. The Acts give a statutory validity to what the workers have already decided upon in times past. They secure the ground already won, so that the workers may go forward, and on that ground raise their standard of living higher; so that the manufacturers may put their houses in order, introducing better management and mechanical methods; so that the standard of living and the standard of general efficiency may advance together. Under the guiding intelligence of the nation these great human enactments, which have been a godsend to the people of this country in the past, will become ever more fruitful as higher civic ideals and a deeper conception of human welfare and industry take the place of the conceptions which have prevailed during the transition period from which we are now emerging.

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